

Have you ever felt trapped?

- **Trapped in your emotions.** Unable to break out of the feelings of anxiety, grief, or depression.
- **Trapped in your body.** Unable to break free from a body of weakness, sickness, and death.
- **Trapped in your situation.** Unable to change your circumstances, problems, or difficulties.
- **Trapped in your relationships.** Unable to find peace in your marriage, family, or friendships.
- **Trapped in your finances.** Unable to break out of debt or find financial security for the future.
- **Trapped in your mind.** Unable to silence the fears or intrusive thoughts that shout in your head.
- **Trapped in your actions.** Unable to break the bondage of unwanted habits or addictions.

If so, then welcome to life in this world!

We love the concept of freedom. We talk about freedom, long for freedom, fight for freedom.

We like to think that we are “free”—free to do what we want, free to make our own choices, free to pursue what we want to pursue, “free to be me.”

But the reality is that we are all in bondage. We are all slaves to something. And we all must depend on something or someone to live, to survive. We are not “free beings.” We cannot declare our own independence from the limitations of our bodies, from the tragedies of this world, from the sins of our heart, from the reality of death.

No, if we are going to experience true freedom, then it must come from a divine deliverance. It must come from a power outside ourselves, above ourselves, working within ourselves.

It must come from God.

This is the journey to freedom.

This is the story of Exodus.

AUTHOR: Early Jewish and Christian traditions have unanimously attributed the authorship of Exodus, and the rest of the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy), to **Moses (1526-1406 BC)**. Jesus also affirmed Moses as the author of the first five books of the Bible—the Book of the Law, the Torah (cf. Matt. 19:8; Mark 7:10; 12:26; Luke 16:29-31; 20:37; 24:27; John 5:46-47; 7:19, 22).

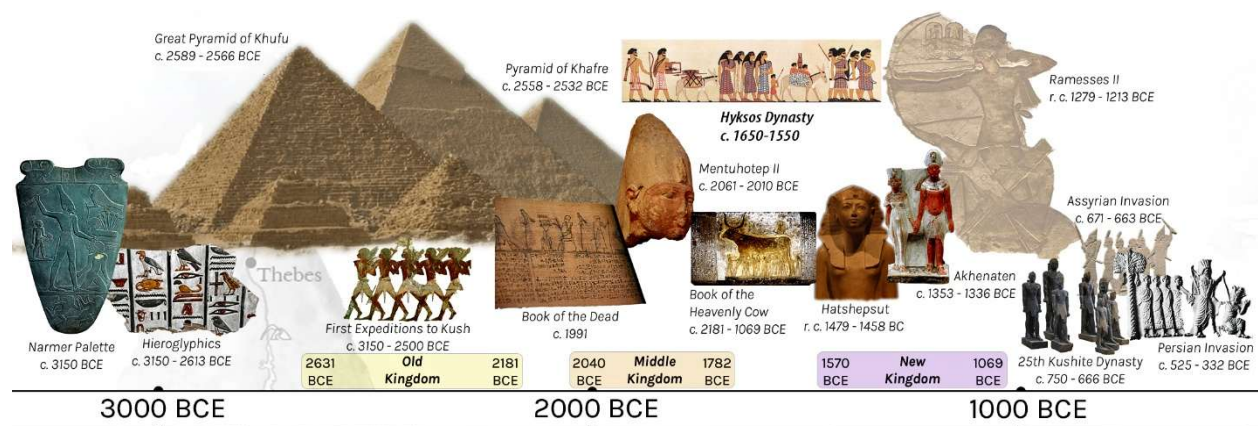
DATE: Exodus, like the rest of the Pentateuch, was written approximately 3500 years ago, some-time between Israel’s exodus from Egypt (~1446 BC) and Moses’ death (~1406 BC).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: Though there is debate about the exact date of Israel’s exodus from Egypt, conservative scholars place it in 1446 BC. This date is based on the literal reading of 1 Kings 6:1:

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.

Since there is strong historical evidence that Solomon’s reign began in 970 BC, this would place his fourth year around 966 BC and thus place the Exodus, 480 years earlier, in 1446 BC.

In 1570 BC, Egypt entered into the New Kingdom period of its history. This period was a reaction against the previous 200 years (1782-1570 BC) when Egypt as a nation was divided into Upper Egypt (southern region of the Nile) and Lower Egypt (northern delta region of the Nile). During this time, Lower Egypt was controlled by a group called the **Hyksos** (shepherd-kings), a Semitic group with many similarities to the Israelites. With the rise of the Thutmose dynasty in 1570 BC, Egypt became much more nationalistic and sought to limit, subjugate, and eventually destroy this Semitic population in the north. This time period would parallel the description in Exodus 1.



Since it is hard to pinpoint the exact dates of the Pharaohs and their reigns, it is still uncertain who the Pharaoh was at the time of the Exodus. But the best guess appears to be **Amenhotep II** (~1453-1426 BC). This Pharaoh was known for his early military conquests, building projects, and cruelty. Interestingly, information on the latter half of his reign is practically non-existent.

PURPOSE: Moses wrote Exodus to detail God’s historical deliverance of His people from Egypt and to describe their formation as the “people of God.” The nation of Israel is called both *out of* bondage in Egypt and *into* a covenant relationship with God. They are redeemed for a purpose.

And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”
—Exodus 19:3-6

Exodus still speaks to us today. We too, as God’s people, are both called *out of* bondage to sin and *into* a covenant relationship with God. We are redeemed *for* a purpose and *toward* a goal.

OUTLINE: Exodus is generally divided into two main sections.

- I. ISRAEL’S DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT (1:1-18:27)**
- II. ISRAEL’S COVENANT WITH GOD (19:1-40:38)**

There is also a chiastic structure to Exodus which points to the centrality of the Mosaic Covenant.

- A. Slavery: Building for Pharaoh (ch. 1-5)**
- B. Redemption: The Lamb of God (ch. 6-12)
- C. The Wilderness: God with Israel (ch. 13-18)
- D. The Covenant: The Law of God (ch. 19-24)**
- C. The Tabernacle: God with Israel (ch. 25-31)
- B. Rebellion: The Golden Calf (ch. 32-34)
- A. Worship: Building for God (ch. 35-40)**

The following study guide takes you through a weekly five-day exploration of the Book of Exodus.

Day 1: **OBSERVATION.** Reading the passage and observing what it says.

Day 2: **MEDITATION.** Reading key verse(s) over and over and memorizing them.

Day 3: **INTERPRETATION.** Doing a word study and/or exploring parallel passages.

Day 4: **DEVOTION.** Reading an excerpt from a classic commentary on Exodus.

Day 5: **APPLICATION.** Seeking to live out God’s Word in your daily life.

We encourage you to do this study individually *and* corporately. Spending time alone in God’s Word is a daily discipline that grows us in the faith. However, our spiritual growth is also connected to and lived out in community. Sharing what you are learning with others, praising God together, and loving and praying for one another are essential to our growth and to our joy.



DUST

GOD'S COVENANT PROMISES

ABRAHAM (GENESIS 12, 15, 17): GOD'S BLESSING TO ALL NATIONS

ISRAEL (EXODUS 19: 1-6) {

- KINGDOM OF PRIESTS TO THE NATIONS
- RESTORATION OF GOD'S PRESENCE

19-40 COVENANT AT MT. SINAI

19-24 GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

TERMS OF THE COVENANT: (CHS 20-23)

- THE 10 COMMANDMENTS
- 52 MORE COMMANDS ABOUT WORSHIP & SOCIAL JUSTICE

SIGN US UP!

MAKE A SANCTUARY FOR ME AND I WILL DWELL AMONG MY PEOPLE. (25: 8)

25-31 TABERNACLE BLUEPRINT

LOTS OF SYMBOLISM

GARDEN OF EDEN

MOST HOLY SPACE
HOT SPOT OF GOD'S PRESENCE

ARK OF THE COVENANT

32-34 ISRAEL BREAKS THE COVENANT

HERE ARE YOUR GODS WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT.

MAKE US A GOD!

LEAVE ME ALONE THAT I MAY DESTROY THEM.

REMEMBER YOUR COVENANT PROMISE TO ABRAHAM!

35-40 MOSES BUILDS THE TABERNACLE

"THE LORD IS MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, ABUNDING IN COVENANT FAITHFULNESS. HE FORGIVES SIN, BUT WILL NOT LEAVE THE WICKED UNPUNISHED." (34: 6-7)

MOSES CAN'T ENTER

Created by the Bible Project

LIVING IN BONDAGE

Exodus 1

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Exodus begins where Genesis ends—with the children of Jacob, the Israelites, in Egypt. During their time in Egypt, the Israelites grow as a nation, multiplying in numbers and creating a real problem for the new Pharaoh.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 1. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; ³ Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; ⁴ Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. ⁵ All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt already). ⁶ And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. ⁷ But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

⁸ Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; ¹⁰ come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.” ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹² But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. ¹³ So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor. ¹⁴ And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage—in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve was with rigor.

¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; ¹⁶ and he said, “When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.” ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?”

¹⁹ And the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.” ²⁰ Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. ²¹ And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them.

²² So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.” (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 1? Why?

Exodus 1:1 begins with the same words as Genesis 46:8—*Now these are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt*. **How many people of Jacob’s family came to Egypt?** _____ (1:5)

With a **highlighter** or colored pencil, mark (or underline) all the words in Exodus 1 that describe the growth of the nation of Israel in Egypt (e.g., *fruitful, increase, grow, multiply, fill*, etc.).

What fears does the new king of Egypt have because of the growth of the Israelites? (1:9-10)

The new king of Egypt (Pharaoh) represents a change in dynasty. There is new political leadership over Egypt and they are greatly concerned about the population growth of the Israelites within their land. Two solutions are proposed and pursued. **Fill in the chart below.**

Verses	Pharaoh’s Solution	What Happens
1:8-14		
1:15-21		

Write down three things you learn about Shiphrah and Puah from this chapter.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What is Pharaoh’s final solution? (1:22) _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 1:17-21 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do;
they let the boys live.
Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them,
“Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”
The midwives answered Pharaoh,
“Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women;
they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”
So God was kind to the midwives
and the people increased and became even more numerous.
And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own. (NIV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

The population growth of the Israelites is described by several key words in Exodus 1—*fruitful, multiplied, grew exceedingly, and filled*.

Read the following passages from Genesis. Mark these key words in each passage.

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.” (9:1)

“And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. (17:2-6)

“By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.” (22:16-17)

“And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” (26:4)

The Lord was standing there beside him, saying, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land on which you are lying. Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. (28:13-14)

God said to him [Jacob]: “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body.” (35:11)

Jacob said to Joseph: “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.’” (48:3-4)

Based on these verses, why do you think Exodus 1 starts off by describing Israel’s growth?

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “Exodus 1” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on Exodus 1:13 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the word “serve” and click on the Strong’s number (H5647) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “serve”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How many times is it used in Exodus? _____ (See Search Results by Book.)

What is its definition? (Note especially (1) and (2a) and (2b) of Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon)

Look at the Concordance Results to see how this Hebrew word is used in other verses in Exodus, especially 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3; 12:31. **How is this Hebrew word used in these verses?**

Go back to Exodus 1:13 on blueletterbible.org. Find the phrase “with rigor” and click on the Strong’s number (H6531) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “with rigor”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? _____

Go to Exodus 1:12 on blueletterbible.org. Find the phrase “they were grieved” and click on the Strong’s number (H6973) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “grieved”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong’s Definitions and Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon.)

Based on these Hebrew words, how would you describe Israel’s situation in Egypt?

DAY FOUR

DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures. Charles Spurgeon stated that, "Every minister ought to read it entirely and carefully through once at least."

EXODUS 1:1-7

In these verses we have...

1. **A recital of the names of the twelve patriarchs**, as they are called, Acts 7:8...

2. **The account which was kept of the number of Jacob's family**, when they went down into Egypt; they were in all *seventy souls* (v. 5). according to the computation we had, Gen. 46:27. This was just the number of the nations by which the earth was peopled, according to the account given, Gen. 10... Notice is here taken of this that their increase in Egypt might appear the more wonderful. Note: It is good for those whose latter end greatly increases often to remember how small their beginning was, Job 8:7.

3. **The death of Joseph**, v. 6. *All that generation* by degrees wore off. Perhaps all Jacob's sons died much about the same time; for there was not more than seven years' difference in age between the eldest and the youngest of them, except Benjamin; and, when death comes into a family, sometimes it makes a full end in a little time. When Joseph, the stay of the family, died, the rest went off apace. Note: We must look upon ourselves and our brethren, and all we converse with, as dying and hastening out of the world. This generation passes away, as those which went before.

4. **The strange increase of Israel in Egypt**. Here are four words used to express it: They *were fruitful*, and *increased abundantly*, like fishes or insects, so that they *multiplied*; and, being generally healthful and strong, they *waxed exceedingly mighty*, so that they began

almost to outnumber the natives, for the land was in all places filled with them, at least Goshen, their own allotment.

This wonderful increase was the fulfillment of the promise long before made unto the fathers. From the call of Abraham, when God first told him he would make of him a great nation, to the deliverance of his seed out of Egypt, it was 430 years, during the first 215 of which they were increased but to 70, but, in the latter half, those seventy multiplied to 600,000 fighting men. Note: Sometimes God's providences may seem for a great while to thwart his promises, and to go counter to them, that his people's faith may be tried, and his own power the more magnified. Though the performance of God's promises is sometimes slow, yet it is always sure; *at the end it shall speak, and not lie*, Hab. 2:3.

EXODUS 1:8-14

The land of Egypt here, at length, becomes to Israel a house of bondage, though hitherto it had been a happy shelter and settlement for them. Note: The place of our satisfaction may soon become the place of our affliction, and that may prove the greatest cross to us of which we said, *This same shall comfort us*. Those may prove our sworn enemies whose parents were our faithful friends; nay, the same persons that loved us may possibly turn to hate us: therefore, cease from man, and say not concerning any place on this side of heaven, *This is my rest forever*.

I. The obligations they lay under to Israel because of Joseph were forgotten: There

arose a new king, after several successions in Joseph's time, *who knew not Joseph*. All that knew him loved him, and were kind to his relations for his sake; but when he was dead he was soon forgotten, and the remembrance of the good offices he had done was either not retained or not regarded, nor had it any influence upon their councils. Note: The best and the most useful and acceptable services done to men are seldom remembered, so as to be recompensed to those that did them, in the notice taken either of their memory, or of their posterity, after their death, Eccl. 9:5, 15. Therefore our great care should be to serve God, and please him, who is not unrighteous, whatever men are, to forget our work and labor of love, Heb. 6:10. If we work for men only, our works, at furthest, will die with us; if for God, they will follow us, Rev. 14:13...

II. Reasons of state were suggested for their dealing hardly with Israel. They are represented as more and mightier than the Egyptians; certainly they were not so, but the king of Egypt, when he resolved to oppress them, would have them thought so, and looked on as a formidable body. Hence it is inferred that if care were not taken to keep them under they would become dangerous to the government, and in time of war would side with their enemies and revolt from their allegiance to the crown of Egypt. Note: It has been the policy of persecutors to represent God's Israel as a dangerous people, *hurtful to kings and provinces*, not fit to be trusted, nay, not fit to be tolerated, that they may have some pretense for the barbarous treatment they design them, Ezra 4:12, etc.; Esth. 3:8...

It is therefore proposed that a course be taken to prevent their increase: *Come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply*. Note: When men deal wickedly, it is common for them to imagine that they deal wisely; but the folly of sin will, at last, be manifested before all men.

III. The method they took to suppress them and check their growth. The Israelites behaved themselves so peaceably and in-offensively that they could not find any occasion of making war upon them, and weakening them by that means: and therefore, they took care to keep them poor, by charging them with heavy taxes, which, some think, is included in the *burdens* with which they afflicted them. By this means they took an effectual course to make them slaves. The Israelites, it should seem, were much more industrious laborious people than the Egyptians, and therefore Pharaoh took care to find them work, both in building (they built him *treasure-cities*), and in husbandry, even *all manner of service in the field*: and this was exacted from them with the utmost rigor and severity. Here are many expressions used, to affect us with the condition of God's people. They had *taskmasters* set over them, who were directed, not only to burden them, but, as much as might be, *to afflict them with their burdens*, and contrive how to make them grievous. They not only made them serve, which was sufficient for Pharaoh's profit, but they made them *serve with rigor*, so that their lives became bitter to them, intending hereby:

1. To break their spirits and rob them of everything in them that was good...
2. To ruin their health and shorten their days, and so diminish their numbers.
3. To discourage them from marrying, since their children would be born to slavery.
4. To oblige them to desert the Hebrews, and incorporate themselves with the Egyptians. Thus he hoped to cut off the name of Israel, that it might be no more in remembrance. And it is to be feared that the oppression they were under had this bad effect upon them, that it brought over many of them to join with the Egyptians in their idolatrous worship; for

we read (Joshua 24:14) that they served other gods in Egypt; and, though it is not mentioned here in this history, yet we find that God had threatened to destroy them for it, even while they were in the land of Egypt: however, they were kept a distinct body, unmingled with the Egyptians, and by their other customs separated from them, which was *the Lord's doing, and marvelous*.

IV. The wonderful increase of the Israelites, notwithstanding the oppressions they groaned under: *The more they afflicted them the more they multiplied*, sorely to the grief and vexation of the Egyptians. Note: Times of affliction have often been the church's growing times... Christianity spread most when it was persecuted: the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church. Those that take counsel against the Lord and his Israel imagine a vain thing (Ps. 2:1), and create so much the greater vexation to themselves: hell and earth cannot diminish those whom Heaven will increase.

EXODUS 1:15-22

The Egyptians' indignation at Israel's increase, notwithstanding the many hardships they put upon them, drove them at length to the most barbarous and inhuman methods of suppressing them, by the murder of their children. It was strange that they did not rather pick quarrels with the grown men, against whom they might perhaps find some occasion: instead to be bloody towards the infants, whom all must own to be innocents, was a sin which they had to cloak for. Note: There is more cruelty in the corrupt heart of man than one would imagine, Rom. 3:15-16. The enmity that is in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman divests men of humanity itself, and makes them forget all pity. One would not think it possible that ever men should be so barbarous and blood-thirsty as the persecutors of God's people have been,

Rev. 17:6. 2. Even confessed innocence is no defense against the old enmity. What blood so guiltless as that of a child new-born? Yet that is prodigally shed like water, and sucked with delight like milk or honey. Pharaoh and Herod sufficiently proved themselves agents for that *great red dragon, who stood to devour the man-child as soon as it was born*, Rev. 12:3-4. Pilate delivered Christ to be crucified, after he had confessed that he found no fault in him. It is well for us that, though man can kill the body, this is all he can do. Two bloody edicts are here signed for the destruction of all the male children that were born to the Hebrews.

I. The midwives were commanded to murder them. It added much to the barbarity of the intended executions that the *midwives* were appointed to be the executioners; for it was to make them, not only bloody, but perfidious, and to oblige them to betray a trust, and to destroy those whom they undertook to save and help. Could he think that their sex would admit such cruelty, and their employment such base treachery? Note: Those who are themselves barbarous think to find, or make, others as barbarous. Pharaoh's project was secretly to engage the midwives to stifle the male children as soon as they were born, and then to lay it upon the difficulty of the birth, or some mischance common in that case. The two midwives he commanded are here named; and perhaps, at this time, which was more than eighty years before their exodus from Egypt, these two might suffice for all the Hebrew women, at least so many of them as lay near the court, as it is plain by 2:5-6, many of them did, and of them he was most jealous.

They are called *Hebrew midwives*, probably not because they were themselves Hebrews (for surely Pharaoh could never expect they should be so barbarous to those of their own nation), but because they were generally

made use of by the Hebrews; and, being Egyptians, he hoped to prevail with them.

They piously disobeyed this impious command. *They feared God*, regarded his law, and dreaded his wrath more than Pharaoh's and therefore saved the men-children alive. Note: If men's commands be any way contrary to the commands of God, we must obey God and not man, Acts 4:19. No power on earth can warrant us, much less oblige us, to sin against God, our chief Lord. Where the fear of God rules in the heart, it will preserve it from the snare which the inordinate fear of man brings.

They justify themselves in this disobedience, when they were charged with it as a crime. They gave a reason for it, which, it seems, God's gracious promise furnished them with—that they came too late to do it, for generally the children were born before they came. I see no reason we have to doubt the truth of this; it is plain that the Hebrews were now under an extraordinary blessing of increase, which may well be supposed to have this effect, that the women had very quick and easy labor, and, the mothers and children being both lively, they seldom needed the help of midwives: this these midwives took notice of, and, concluding it to the finger of God, were thereby emboldened to disobey the king, in favor of those whom Heaven thus favored, and with this justified themselves before Pharaoh, when he called them to an

account for it. Note: God is a readier help to his people in distress than any other helpers are, and often anticipates them with the blessings of his goodness; such deliverances lay them under peculiarly strong obligations.

God rewarded them for their tenderness towards his people. *He dealt well with them*. Note: God will be behind-hand with none for any kindness done to his people, taking it as done to himself. In particular, *he made them houses* (v. 21), built them up into families, blessed their children, and prospered them in all they did. The services done for God's Israel are often repaid in kind. The midwives kept up the Israelites' houses, and, in recompence for it, *God made them houses*. The recompence has relation to the principle upon which they went... Note: Religion and piety are good friends to outward prosperity: the fear of God in a house will help to build it up and establish it...

II. When this project did not take effect, Pharaoh gave public orders to all his people to drown all the male children of the Hebrews. We may suppose it was made highly penal for any to know of the birth of a son to an Israelite, and not to give information to those who were appointed to throw him into the river. Note: The enemies of the church have been restless in their endeavors to *wear out the saints of the Most High*, Dan. 7:25. But *he that sits in heaven shall laugh at them*. See Psalm 2:4.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 1 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week from Exodus 1.

Two of the heroes in Exodus are **Shiphrah** (meaning “beautiful”) and **Puah** (meaning “splendid”), the Hebrew midwives. While Pharaoh remains unnamed in this passage, God takes time to name and to honor these two women. They stand against the greatest human power in the world at that time because they fear the greatest power in the universe at all times, the Lord God.

When is a time in your life that you can remember being pressured or threatened to do something that was wrong. How did you respond?

What do you think it means to “fear God”? Why is this so important in these situations?

Read the following Bible verses out loud. Reflect on them as you face your own challenges today.

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

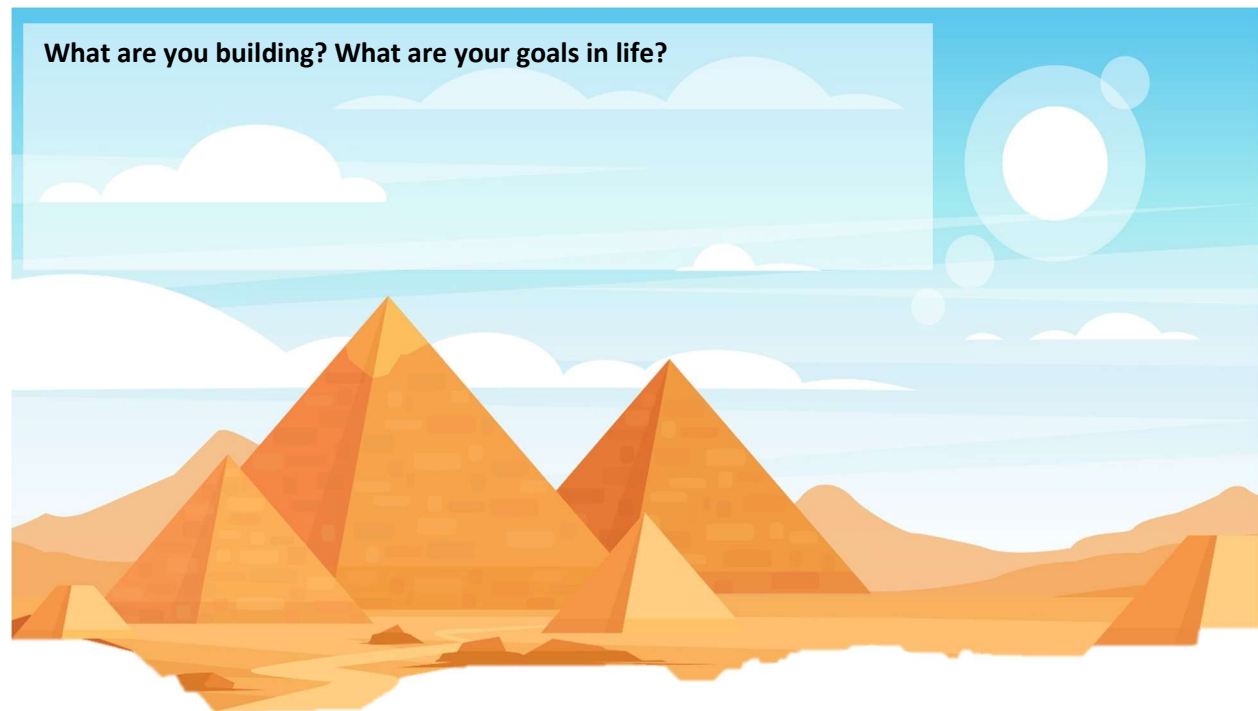
Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (Ephesians 6:13)

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

The Exodus story is a picture of redemption. The Israelites' bondage in Egypt illustrates our own bondage in sin. The king of Egypt is similar to the *god of this world*—Satan. God's deliverance of His people from the bondage of Egypt serves as a spiritual analogy for our own redemption. Keep this in mind as we continue this study through the book of Exodus.

Take a moment to reflect on your own life. Answer the questions in the graphic below.



What dominates you? What dominates your time, attention, emotions, thoughts, or habits?



ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

It is the exodus that provides the primary model of God's idea of redemption, not just in the Old Testament but even in the New.

Tony Merida

The story of the midwives is a story of heroic resistance. So noteworthy was their courage that their personal names are recorded, in contrast to any of the elders of Israel and even the Pharaoh.

Douglas K. Stuart

For all his "greatness" Pharaoh is left unnamed while the midwives are remembered individually. This is Exodus' perception of who is important and who is not!

J. Alec Motyer

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- Who is someone that you admire (either in history or in your own life) who stood firm in their faith against opposition or in the midst of difficulty?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 1? Why?
- What problems does the new Pharaoh see with this growing population of Israelites? What are his proposed solutions? Why do these solutions ultimately fail?
- What observations can you make about Shiphrah and Puah? Why do you think the Bible makes sure to mention them by name?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- In what ways have you been tempted to compromise your beliefs because of the pressures of this world? Read the verses on page 15 out loud. Pray for one another as you seek to stand firm with the faith of Shiphrah and Puah in today's world.

CRYING OUT FOR REDEMPTION

Exodus 2

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Israel is in slavery, under hard bondage, and God seems to be absent. Yet behind the scenes, He is raising up a deliverer who will one day lead the people out of bondage. But this deliverer must be prepared first.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 2. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. ² So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. ³ But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. ⁴ And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

⁵ Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. ⁶ And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?" ⁸ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. ⁹ Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. ¹⁰ And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

¹¹ Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. ¹² So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" ¹⁴ Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How is it that you have come so soon today?" ¹⁹ And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock." ²⁰ So he said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

²¹ Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses. ²² And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land.”

²³ Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. ²⁴ So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵ And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them. (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 2? Why?

There are three distinct scenes in Exodus 2. **Fill in the chart below with your observations from each scene.** Note the characters in each scene, what happens, and what you learn about Moses.

	Main Characters	Main Actions	Characteristics of Moses
Scene One 2:1-10			
Scene Two 2:11-15			
Scene Three 2:16-22			

What do the Israelites do in light of their suffering in Egypt? (2:23) _____

What does God do in light of their cry to Him? (2:24-25) _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 2:23-25 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*During those many days the king of Egypt died,
and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery
and cried out for help.
Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God.
And God heard their groaning,
and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
God saw the people of Israel—
and God knew. (ESV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE

INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "Exodus 2" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on Exodus 2:3 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the word "ark" and click on the Strong's number (H8392) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is the Hebrew word for "ark"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially the Outline of Biblical Usage and Brown-Driver-Briggs.)

What similarities do you see between Noah's ark and this ark for Moses?

Next go to Exodus 2:6 on blueletterbible.org. Find the phrase "she had compassion" and click on the Strong's number (H2550) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for "compassion"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

In what passage is it first used in the OT? _____ (See Concordance Results.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong's Definitions and Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.)

Though unnamed in Exodus 2, we later know the names of Moses' parents and his older siblings.

What are the names of Moses' parents? (Ex. 6:20) _____

What is the name of Moses' older sister? (Ex. 15:20; Num. 26:59) _____

What is the name of Moses' older brother? (Ex. 4:14) _____

What tribe was Moses born into? (Ex. 2:1) _____

Exodus 2 does not give us many details of Moses' early life. In fact, Exodus summarizes the first eighty years of Moses' life in twenty-two verses! As the author, Moses was obviously not too interested in highlighting his early life. Instead, he wanted the focus to be on God and His grace.

Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin in Acts 7 provides us with a little more information about Moses' early life. **Read Acts 7:17-34 below.** Mark key words or phrases as you read.

"As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. Then 'a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.' He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family. When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?' But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'

When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons. After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'"

Write down 5-10 things that you learn about Moses from Stephen's speech in Acts 7.

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures. Charles Spurgeon stated that, "Every minister ought to read it entirely and carefully through once at least."

This chapter begins the story of Moses, that man of renown, famed for his intimate acquaintance with Heaven and his eminent usefulness on earth, and the most remarkable type of Christ, as a prophet, savior, lawgiver, and mediator, in all the Old Testament.

EXODUS 2:1-4

Moses was a Levite, both by father and mother. Jacob left Levi under marks of disgrace (Gen. 49:5); and yet, soon after, Moses appears a descendant from him, that he might typify Christ, who came in the likeness of sinful flesh and was made a curse for us. This tribe began to be distinguished from the rest by the birth of Moses, as afterwards it became remarkable in many other instances...

I. He was hidden. It seems to have been just at the time of his birth that the cruel law was made for the murder of all the male children of the Hebrews; and many, no doubt, perished by the execution of it. The parents of Moses had Miriam and Aaron, both older than he, born to them before this edict came out, and had nursed them without that peril: but those that begin the world in peace know not what troubles they may meet with before they have got through it. Probably the mother of Moses was full of anxiety in the expectation of his birth, now that this edict was in force, and was ready to say, *Blessed are the barren that never bore*, Lk. 23:29. Yet this child proves the glory of his father's house. Thus that which is most our fear often proves, in the issue, most our joy. Observe the beauty of providence: just at the time when Pharaoh's cruelty rose to this height the deliverer was born, though he did not appear

for many years after. Note: When men are projecting the church's ruin God is preparing for its salvation...

1. His parents observed him to be a *goodly child*, more than ordinarily beautiful; he was *fair to God*, Acts 7:20. They fancied he had a luster in his countenance that was something more than human, and was a specimen of the shining of his face afterwards, Ex. 34:29. Note: God sometimes gives early earnest of his gifts, and manifests himself betimes in those for whom and by whom he designs to do great things... *Three months* they hid him in some private apartment of their own house, though probably with the hazard of their own lives, had he been discovered. Herein Moses was a type of Christ, who, in his infancy, was forced to abscond, and in Egypt too (Mt. 2:13), and was wonderfully preserved, when many innocents were butchered. It is said (Heb. 11:23) that the parents of Moses *hid him by faith*; some think they had a special revelation to them that the deliverer should spring from their loins; however they had the general promise of Israel's preservation, which they acted faith upon, and in that faith hid their child, not being afraid of the penalty annexed to the king's commandment... Note: Faith in God will set us above the ensnaring fear of man.

II. He was exposed. At three months' end, probably when the searchers came about to look for concealed children, so that they could not hide him any longer (their faith perhaps beginning now to fail), they put him in an ark of bulrushes by the *river's brink*, and set his sister at some distance to watch what would become of him, and into whose hands

he would fall. God put it into their hearts to do this, to bring about his own purposes, that Moses might by this means be brought into the hands of Pharaoh's daughter...

EXODUS 2: 5-10

I. Moses saved from perishing. Come see the place where that great man lay when he was a little child; he lay in a bulrush-basket by the river's side. Had he been left to lie there, he must have perished in a little time with hunger, if he had not been sooner washed into the river or devoured by a crocodile. Had he fallen into any other hands than those he did fall into, they would have thrown him straightway into the river; but Providence brings no less a person there than Pharaoh's daughter, just at that juncture, guides her to the place where this poor forlorn infant lay, and inclines her heart to pity it, which she dares do when none else would... *The babe wept*, which moved the compassion of the princess, as no doubt his beauty did. Note: Those are hard-hearted indeed that have not a tender compassion for helpless infancy... Though we were not thus exposed (that we were not was God's mercy) yet many were the perils we were surrounded with in our infancy, out of which the Lord delivered us, Psalm 22:9-10. God often raises up friends for his people even among their enemies. Pharaoh cruelly seeks Israel's destruction, but his own daughter charitably cares for a Hebrew child, and not only so, but, beyond her intention, preserves Israel's deliverer. *O Lord, how wonderful are thy counsels!*

II. Moses well provided with a good nurse, his own dear mother! Pharaoh's daughter thinks it convenient that he should have a Hebrew nurse, and the sister of Moses, with art and good management, introduces the mother into the place of a nurse, to the great advantage of the child; for mothers are the best nurses... It was also an unspeakable

satisfaction to the mother, who received her son as life from the dead, and now could enjoy him without fear...

III. Moses became the son of Pharaoh's daughter, his parents herein perhaps not only yielding to necessity, having nursed him *for her*, but too much pleased with the honor thereby done to their son; for the smiles of the world are stronger temptations than its frowns, and more difficult to resist. The tradition of the Jews is that Pharaoh's daughter had no child of her own, and that she was the only child of her father, so that when he was adopted for her son he stood fair for the crown: however it is certain he stood fair for the best preferments of the court in due time, and in the meantime had the advantage of the best education and improvements of the court, with the help of which, having a great genius, he became master of all the lawful learning of the Egyptians, Acts 7:22. Note: Providence pleases itself sometimes in raising the poor out of the dust, to set them among princes, Ps. 113:7-8. Many who, by their birth, seem marked for obscurity and poverty, by surprising events of Providence are brought to sit at the upper end of the world, to make men know that *the heavens do rule*. Those whom God designs for great services he finds ways to qualify and prepare beforehand...

IV. Moses named. The Jews tell us that his father, at his circumcision, called him *Joachim*, but Pharaoh's daughter called him *Moses*, *Drawn out of the water*, so it signifies in the Egyptian language. The calling of the Jewish lawgiver by an Egyptian name is a happy omen to the Gentile world, and gives hopes of that day when it shall be said, *Blessed be Egypt my people*, Isa. 19:25. And his tuition at court was an earnest of the performance of that promise, Isa. 49:23, *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers*.

EXODUS 2:11-15

Moses had now passed the first forty years of his life in the court of Pharaoh, preparing himself for business; and now it was time for him to enter upon action.

I. He boldly owns and espouses the cause of God's people: *When Moses was grown he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens.* The best exposition of these words we have from an inspired pen, Heb. 11:24-26, where we are told that by this he expressed his holy contempt of the honors and pleasures of the Egyptian court; he *refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter...* The temptation was indeed very strong. He had a fair opportunity to make his fortune, and to have been serviceable to Israel too, with his interest at court. He was obliged, in gratitude as well as interest, to Pharaoh's daughter, and yet he obtained a glorious victory by faith over his temptation. He reckoned it much more his honor and advantage to be a son of Abraham than to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He had a tender concern for his poor brethren in bondage, with whom (though he might easily have avoided it) he *chose to suffer affliction*; he looked on their burdens as one that not only pitied them, but was resolved to venture with them, and, if occasion were, to venture for them.

II. He gives a specimen of the great things he was afterwards to do for God and his Israel... Moses was to be used in plaguing the Egyptians for the wrongs they had done to God's Israel; and, as a specimen of that, he killed the Egyptian who smote the Hebrew; probably it was one of the Egyptian taskmasters, whom he found abusing his Hebrew slave, a relation (as some think) of Moses, a man of the same tribe...

Moses was also to be employed in governing Israel, and as a specimen of this, we have him

here trying to end a controversy between two Hebrews, in which he is forced (as he did afterwards for forty years) to suffer their manners... It does not appear what was the occasion for this conflict; but, whatever it was, it was certainly very unseasonable for Hebrews to strive with one another when they were all oppressed and ruled with rigor by the Egyptians. Had they not beating enough from the Egyptians, but they must beat one another? Note: Even sufferings in common do not always unite God's professing people to one another, so much as one might reasonably expect. When God raises up instruments of salvation for the church they will find enough to do, not only with oppressing Egyptians, to restrain them, but with quarrelsome Israelites, to reconcile them...

Moses endeavored to make them friends, a good office; thus we find Christ often reproving his disciples' strife (Lk. 9:46), for he was a prophet like unto Moses, a healing prophet, a peacemaker, who visited his brethren with a design to slay all enmities. The reproof Moses gave on this occasion may still be of use, *Why do you smite your companion?* Note: Smiting our fellows is bad in any situation—smiting with tongue or hand, either in a way of persecution or in a way of strife and contention. Consider the person you smite; it is thy fellow, thy fellow-creature, thy fellow-Christian, it is thy fellow-servant, thy fellow-sufferer. Consider the cause, *Why do you smite your brother?* Perhaps it is for no cause at all, or no just cause, or none worth speaking of.

But Moses experiences the ill success of his attempt. *He said, Who made thee a prince?* He that did the wrong thus quarreled with Moses; the injured party, it should seem, was inclinable enough to peace, but the wrongdoer was thus touchy. Note: It is a sign of guilt to be impatient of reproof; and it is often easier to persuade the injured to bear the

trouble of taking wrong than the injurious to bear the conviction of having *done wrong*. It was a very wise and mild reproof which Moses gave to this quarrelsome Hebrew, but he could not bear it, he kicked against the pricks (Act 9:5), and crossed questions with his reprover. He challenges Moses' authority: *Who made thee a prince?* A man needs no great authority for the giving of a friendly reproof, it is an act of kindness; yet this man needs will interpret it an act of dominion, and represents his reprover as imperious and assuming. Thus, when people dislike good discourse, or a seasonable admonition, they will call it *preaching*, as if a man could not speak a word for God and against sin but he took too much upon him. Yet Moses was indeed a prince and a judge, and knew it, and thought the Hebrews would have understood it, and joined with him; but they stood in their own light, and *thrust him away*.

The guilty one then upbraids him with what he had done in killing the Egyptian: *Do you intend to kill me?* See what base constructions malice puts upon the best words and actions. Moses, for reproving him is immediately charged with a design to kill him. An attempt upon his sin was interpreted an attempt upon his life; and his having killed the Egyptian was thought sufficient to justify the suspicion; as if Moses made no difference between an Egyptian and a Hebrew. If Moses, to right an injured Hebrew, had put his life in his hand, and slain an Egyptian, he ought therefore to have submitted to him, not only as a friend to the Hebrews, but as a friend that had more than ordinary power and zeal. But he throws that in his teeth as a crime which was bravely done, and was intended as a specimen of the promised deliverance; if the Hebrews had taken the hint, and come in to Moses as their head and captain, it is probable that they would have been delivered now; but, despising their deliverer, their deliverance was justly deferred, and their

bondage prolonged forty years, as afterwards their despising Canaan kept them out of it forty years more. Note: Men know not what they do, nor what enemies they are to their own interest, when they resist and despise faithful reproofs and reprovers... It is no new thing for the church's best friends to meet with a great deal of opposition and discouragement in their healing, saving attempts, even from their own mother's children; Christ himself was set at nought by the builders, and is still rejected by those he would save...

The affront given Moses proved a kindness to him; it gave him to understand that his killing the Egyptian was discovered, and so he had time to make his escape, otherwise the wrath of Pharaoh might have surprised him and taken him off. Note: God can overrule even the strife of tongues, so as, one way or other, to bring good to his people out of it. Information was brought to Pharaoh (and it is well if it was not brought by the Hebrew himself whom Moses reproved) of his killing the Egyptian; warrants are presently out for the apprehending of Moses, which obliged him to shift for his own safety, by flying into the land of Midian. Moses did this out of a prudent care of his own life...

It is said, *He feared not the wrath of the king* [Heb. 11:27]; here it is said he *feared*, v. 14. He did not fear with a fear of diffidence and amazement, which weakens and has torment, but with a fear of diligence, which quickened him to take that way which Providence opened to him for his own preservation. God ordered it for wise and holy ends. Things were not yet ripe for Israel's deliverance: the measure of Egypt's iniquity was not yet full; the Hebrews were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet increased to such a multitude as God designed; Moses is to be further fitted for the service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present, till the time to favor Israel, even the set time, should come.

God guided Moses to Midian because the Midianites were of the seed of Abraham, and retained the worship of the true God among them, so that he might have not only a safe but a comfortable settlement among them. And through this country he was afterwards to lead Israel, with which (that he might do it the better) he now had opportunity of making himself acquainted. Hither he came, and sat down by a well, tired and thoughtful, at a loss, and waiting to see which way Providence would direct him. It was a great change with him, since he was but the other day at ease in Pharaoh's court: thus God tried his faith, and it was found to praise and honor.

EXODUS 2:16-22

Moses here gains a settlement in Midian, just as his father Jacob had gained one in Syria, Gen. 29:2. And both these instances should encourage us to trust Providence, and to follow it. Events that seem inconsiderable, and purely accidental, afterwards appear to have been designed by the wisdom of God for very good purposes, and of great consequence to his people. A casual transient occurrence has sometimes occasioned the greatest and happiest turns of a man's life.

I. Concerning the seven daughters of Reuel the priest or prince of Midian. They were humble, and very industrious, according as the employment of the country was: they *drew water for their father's flock*. If their father was a prince, it teaches us that even those who are honorably born, and are of quality and distinction in their country, should yet apply themselves to some useful business, and what their hand finds to do, do it with all their might. Idleness can be no one's honor. If their father was a priest, it teaches us that ministers' children should, in a special manner, be examples of humility and industry...

II. Concerning Moses. He was taken for an Egyptian; and strangers must be content to be the subjects of mistake; but it is observable:

1. How ready he was to help Reuel's daughters to water their flocks. Though bred in learning and at court, yet he knew how to turn his hand to such an office as this when there was occasion; nor had he learned of the Egyptians to despise shepherds. Note: Those that have had a liberal education yet should not be strangers to servile work, because they know not what necessity Providence may put them in of working for themselves, or what opportunity Providence may give them of being serviceable to others. These young women met with some opposition in their employment, more than they and their servants could conquer; the shepherds of some neighboring prince, as some think, or some idle fellows that called themselves shepherds, *drove away their flocks*; but Moses, though melancholy and in distress, *stood up and helped them*, not only to get clear of the shepherds, but, when that was done, to water the flocks. This he did, not only in complaisance to the daughters of Reuel (though that also did very well become him), but because, wherever he was, as occasion offered itself he loved to be doing justice, and appearing in the defense of such as he saw injured, which every man ought to do as far as it is in the power of his hand to do it. And he loved to be doing good. Wherever the Providence of God casts us we should desire and endeavor to be useful; and, when we cannot do the good we would, we must be ready to do the good we can. And he that is faithful in a little shall be entrusted with more... Moses soon recommended himself to the esteem and good affection of this prince of Midian, who took him into his house, and, in process of time, married one of his daughters to him, by whom he had a son, whom he called *Gershom, a stranger there*, that if ever God should give him a home of

his own he might keep in remembrance the land in which he had been a stranger. Now this settlement of Moses in Midian was designed by Providence to shelter him for the present. God will find hiding-places for his people in the day of their distress; nay, he will himself be a sanctuary, and will secure them, either under heaven or in heaven.

But this time was also designed to prepare him for the great services he was further designed for. His manner of life in Midian, where he kept the flock of his father-in-law (having none of his own to keep), would be of use to him, to inure him to hardship and poverty, that he might learn how to want as well as how to abound. Those whom God intends to exalt he first humbles...

EXODUS 2:23-25

I. The continuance of the Israelites' bondage in Egypt...When one Pharaoh died, another rose up in his place that was governed by the same maxims, and was as cruel to Israel as his predecessors. If there was sometimes a little relaxation, yet it presently revived again with as much rigor as ever; and probably, as the more Israel were oppressed the more they multiplied, so the more they multiplied the more they were oppressed. Note: Sometimes God suffers the rod of the wicked to lie very long and very heavily on the lot of the righteous...

II. The preface to their deliverance. *They cried*, v. 23. Now, at last, they began to think of God under their troubles, and to return to him from the idols they had served. Hitherto they had fretted at the instruments of their trouble, but God was not in all their thoughts. But before God unbound them he put it into their hearts to cry unto him. Note: It is a good sign that God is coming towards us with deliverance when he inclines and enables us to cry to him for it. The name of God is here emphatically prefixed to four different expressions of a kind intention towards them.

1. *God heard their groaning*; that is, he took notice of their complaints. The groans of the oppressed cry aloud in the ears of the righteous God, to whom vengeance belongs...

2. *God remembered his covenant*, which he seemed to have forgotten, but of which he is ever mindful...

3. *God looked upon them*. Moses looked upon them and pitied them; but now God looked upon them and helped them.

4. *God had a respect unto them*, a favorable respect to them as his own. The frequent repetition of the name of God intimates that now we are to expect something great. His eyes, which run to and fro through the earth, are now fixed upon Israel, to show himself strong, to show himself a God on their behalf.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 2 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week from Exodus 2.

Hebrews 11 details the acts of faith displayed in Exodus 2.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. (Hebrews 11:23-27)

List the ways in which faith was displayed in the actions of Moses and his parents in Exodus 2.

In what ways can you show this kind of faith in your own life today?

Though Moses exercised faith in God in Exodus 2, he also made some poor choices. His desire to rescue his people led to his murder of an Egyptian taskmaster. There is no indication that this was God's will. Instead, it appears to be Moses acting with good intent but wrong actions. It was Moses thinking that the end justified the means. It was the right motive but the wrong method.

We can often get trapped in a similar mindset. We may have good motives (as far as we can tell) but instead of waiting on God and seeking His wisdom, we act in our own wisdom and strength. This is similar to Peter when he thought he was protecting Christ by wielding his sword and cutting off the ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus (cf. Matt. 26:51-52; John 18:10-11). We can make things worse when we try to fight God's battles using our own methods and not His.

Can you think of a time in your own life when you may have had good motives but the way in which you tried to achieve something actually backfired on you? What did you learn from this?

There is another relevant application in Exodus 2. It seems as if God was not only preparing Moses to be Israel's deliverer but also preparing His people to seek after Him. Up until this point in the narrative, there is no mention that the Israelites were crying out to God. God seemed absent to them but, by the same token, the Israelites also seemed to not be seeking Him or praying to Him.

It is when Israel cried out that God heard, remembered, looked, and acknowledged their cry.

We often ignore God, or at least put Him on the backburner, until things get beyond our control or we feel desperate and overwhelmed with our situation. Sometimes it is only when we have no other place to turn that we finally turn to God.

Our prayers lack fervency until we feel the urgency of our need for Him!

Read and reflect on Psalm 13. Use this psalm as a guide for your own prayer to God. Read one section at a time and then respond to God in prayer based on what He speaks to you in His Word.

*How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul
And have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

*Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
Light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"
Lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.*

*But I have trusted in Your steadfast love;
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.*

Spend some time in prayer this week praying fervently for God to work in your own life for His glory, to work in our church for His kingdom's sake, and to work in our nation for His purposes.

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

*In the work of God,
mere human effort,
however well intentioned,
committed or influential,
results in failure.*

J. Alec Motyer

*Faith makes a person wise.
It is sanctified common sense.
It is not putting my hands into
boiling water with the impression
that it will not scald me; it is not
doing foolish and absurd things.
Faith is believing in God and acting
toward God as we ought to do...
It is sanctified reason,
enlightened from on high!*

Charles H. Spurgeon

*In Egypt Moses learned how to be
somebody. In Midian he learned how
to be nobody. Much he had learned
in Egypt, but more in Midian.*

David Guzik

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- When is a time in your life that you can remember crying out to God? Why did this time feel so desperate? What ultimately happened?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 2? Why?
- What do you think it was like for Moses' mother to hide him for three months? What emotions do you think she experienced? What thoughts do you think she had?
- What do you learn about faith from Moses' parents? From Moses? From the Israelites?
- What do you think was going through Moses' mind as he killed the Egyptian? Why do you think the Hebrews did not seemingly welcome Moses' intervention on their behalf?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Moses had faith in God but still made a foolish, rash decision in killing the Egyptian. His motive may have been good but his method was wrong. He acted in his own strength, timing, and wisdom instead of waiting on God. What can you learn from this?

ENCOUNTERING GOD

Exodus 3

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Moses is 80 years old. He spent his first 40 years as a prince in Egypt. He spent the next 40 years as a shepherd in Midian. He is living a simple life in a simple land. But then Moses encounters God.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 3. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. ³ Then Moses said, “I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.”

⁴ So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”

⁵ Then He said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.” ⁶ Moreover He said, “I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

⁷ And the Lord said: “I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. ⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. ⁹ Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹² So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

¹³ Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

¹⁵ Moreover God said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.’” ¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, “I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt;” ¹⁷ and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’” ¹⁸ Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, ‘The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.’ ¹⁹ But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. ²⁰ So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. ²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. ²² But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.” (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 3? Why?



Answer the following questions based on Exodus 3:1-6:

Where is Moses?

What is he doing?

What does he see?

Who speaks to him?

How does he respond?

Why does he respond this way?

Exodus 3 is a key chapter in understanding the character and actions of God. Using a highlighter or colored pencil, go back through Exodus 3 and mark each time God uses an “I” statement. Highlight the action or verb that follows each of these “I” statements.

What does God reveal about Himself in the following verses? (Note each of the “I” statements.)

3:6 _____

3:7a _____

3:7b _____

3:8 _____

3:9 _____

3:10 _____

3:12 _____

3:14 _____

3:16 _____

3:17 _____

3:19 _____

3:20a _____

3:20b _____

3:21 _____

How would you summarize the character and actions of God based on these statements?

What is Moses’ first question in response to God’s call? (3:12)

What is God’s answer? (3:13) _____

What is Moses’ second question in response to God’s call? (3:13)

What is God’s answer? (3:14) _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 3:14-15 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.

This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

God also said to Moses,

*“Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—
the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’*

*This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation.” (NIV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

In Exodus 3, the **Angel of the Lord** again steps onto the stage. This is an important figure in the OT and so it is vital to understand who this person is.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "Exodus 3" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on Exodus 3:2 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the word "angel" and click on the Strong's number (H4397) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is the Hebrew word for "angel"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong's Definitions and Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.)

Though "angel" is a valid translation of this Hebrew word, it is obvious that this is no mere created angel. Rather, He is the representative, the messenger, the very visible form of the invisible God.

Read the following passages regarding the Angel of the Lord. Mark key phrases as you read.

*Now the **Angel of the Lord** found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The **Angel of the Lord** said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand." Then the **Angel of the Lord** said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude."*

*And the **Angel of the Lord** said to her:*

*"Behold, you are with child,
And you shall bear a son.
You shall call his name Ishmael,
Because the Lord has heard your affliction.
He shall be a wild man;
His hand shall be against every man,
And every man's hand against him.
And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."*

Then she called the name of the Lord who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?" (Genesis 16:7-13)

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the **Angel of the Lord** called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied.

"Do not lay a hand on the boy," He said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son." Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." (Genesis 22:9-14)

The **Angel of the Lord** came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? Therefore I said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" (Judg. 2:1-3)

So the **Angel of the Lord** said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or similar drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe." Then Manoah said to the **Angel of the Lord**, "Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You." And the **Angel of the Lord** said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the Lord." (For Manoah did not know He was the **Angel of the Lord**.) Then Manoah said to the **Angel of the Lord**, "What is Your name, that when Your words come to pass we may honor You?" And the **Angel of the Lord** said to him, "Why do you ask My name, seeing it is wonderful?"

So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the Lord. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on—it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the **Angel of the Lord** ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. When the **Angel of the Lord** appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He was the **Angel of the Lord**. And Manoah said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God!" (Judges 13:13-22)

This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him,
And saved him out of all his troubles.
The **Angel of the Lord** encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.
Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;
Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! (Psalm 34:6-8)

What do you learn about the Angel of the Lord from these passages?

Next go to Exodus 3:14 on blueletterbible.org. Find the phrase “I am” and click on the Strong’s number (H1961) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “I am”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (For some reason, the KJV Translation Count is wrong online. See the Concordance Results to get the accurate number.)

What is its definition? (Note especially 1C in the Outline of Biblical Usage.)

This name of God becomes central throughout all of Scripture. This Hebrew word (which is a 1st person verb in Hebrew, “I am”) is the root of the name “LORD” which is in the 3rd person, “He is.”

Next go to Exodus 3:15 on blueletterbible.org. Find the name “the Lord” and click on the Strong’s number (H3068) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “the Lord”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See the KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong’s Definitions and 2. in Brown-Driver-Briggs.)

The name—I AM—speaks volumes about the character and nature of God. In one sense, it is simple; in another sense, it is the most profound theological statement in all of Scripture.

Read the following excerpt from John Durham’s *Word Biblical Commentary on Exodus*.

I AM WHO I AM, replies God. The verbs are first person common imperfects of the verb, *haya*, “to be,” connoting continuing, unfinished action: “I am being that I am being,” or “I am the Is-ing One,” that is “the One Who Always Is.” Not conceptual being, being in the abstract, but active being, is the intent of this reply. It is a reply that suggests that it is inappropriate to refer to God as “was” or as “will be,” for the reality of this active existence can be suggested only by the present: “is” or “is-ing,” “Always Is,” or “Am” ... Yahweh Is. However absent he may have seemed to the oppressed Israelites in Egypt... Yahweh Is, and his Is-ness means Presence.

What stands out to you after reading this excerpt from Durham’s commentary?

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from MacLaren's *Expositions of Holy Scriptures*. **Alexander MacLaren** (1826-1910) was a Baptist pastor in Manchester, England whose sermons were known for "profundity of thought, logical arrangement, eloquence of appeal, and power over the human heart."

**THE BUSH THAT BURNED BUT DID NOT
BURN OUT (EXODUS 3:1-6)**

It was a very sharp descent from Pharaoh's palace to the wilderness, and forty years of a shepherd's life were a strange contrast to the brilliant future that once seemed likely for Moses. But God tests His weapons before He uses them, and great men are generally prepared for great deeds by great sorrows. Solitude is 'the mother-country of the strong,' and the wilderness, with its savage crags, its awful silence, and the unbroken round of its blue heaven, was a better place to meet God than in the heavy air of a palace, or the profitless splendors of a court.

So as this lonely shepherd is passing slowly in front of his flock, he sees a strange light that asserted itself, even in the brightness of the desert sunshine. 'The bush' does not mean one single shrub. Rather, it implies some little group, or cluster, of the dry thorny acacias, which are characteristic of the land, and over which any ordinary fire would have passed like a flash, leaving them all in grey ashes. But this steady light persists long enough to draw the attention of the shepherd, and to admit of his travelling some distance to reach it. And then the Lord speaks...

The fire is distinctly a divine symbol... There are the smoking lamp and the blazing furnace in the early vision granted to Abraham. There is the pillar of fire by night, that lay over the desert camp of the wandering Israelites. There is Isaiah's word, 'The light of Israel shall be a flaming fire.' There is the whole of the NT teaching, turning on the manifestation of God through His Spirit. There are John the Baptist's words, 'He shall baptize you with

the Holy Ghost and with fire.' There is the day of Pentecost, when the 'tongues of fire sat upon each of them.' And what is meant by the great word of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'Our God is a consuming fire'? ...

In almost every religion on the face of the earth, you will find a sacred significance attached to fire. That significance is not primarily destruction, as we sometimes suppose, an error which has led to ghastly misunderstandings of some Scriptures, and of the God whom they reveal...

Fire is the source of warmth, and so, in a sense, of life. It is full of quick energy, it transmutes all kinds of dead matter into its own ruddy likeness, sending up the fat of the sacrifices in wreathes of smoke that aspire heavenward; and changing all the gross, heavy, earthly dullness into flame, more akin to the heaven into which it rises.

Therefore, as cleansing, as the source of life, light, warmth, change, as glorifying, transmuting, purifying, refining, fire is the fitting symbol of the mightiest of all creative energy. And the Bible has consecrated the symbolism, and bade us think of the Lord Himself as the central fiery Spirit of the whole universe, a spark from whom irradiates and vitalizes everything that lives.

Nor should we forget, on the other side, that the very felicity of this emblem is, that along with all these blessed thoughts of life-giving and purifying, there does come likewise the more solemn teaching of God's destructive power. 'What maketh heaven, that maketh hell'; and the same God is the fire to quicken, to sanctify, to bless; and resisted, rejected,

neglected, is the fire that consumes; the savor of life unto life, or the savor of death unto death.

And then, still further, notice that this flame is undying, steady, unflickering. What does that mean? Adopting the principle which I have already taken as our guide, that the symbol and the following oral revelation teach the same truth, there can be no question as to that answer. 'I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

I AM THAT I AM

That is to say, the fire that burns and does not burn out, which has no tendency to destruction in its very energy, and is not consumed by its own activity, is surely a symbol of the one Being whose being derives its law and its source from Himself, who only can say—I AM THAT I AM—the law of His nature, the foundation of His being, the only conditions of His existence being, as it were, enclosed within the limits of His own nature. You and I have to say, 'I am that which I have become,' or 'I am that which I was born,' or 'I am that which circumstances have made me.' He says, I AM THAT I AM. All other creatures are links; this is the staple from which they all hang. All other being is derived, and therefore limited and changeable; this Being is underived, absolute, self-dependent, and therefore unalterable for evermore. Because we live we die. In living the process is going on of which death is the end. But God lives for evermore, a flame that does not burn out; therefore His resources are inexhaustible, His power unwearied. He needs no rest for recuperation of wasted energy. His gifts diminish not the store which He has to bestow. He gives, and is none the poorer; He works, and is never weary; He operates unspent; He loves, and He loves forever; and through the ages the fire burns on, unconsumed and undecayed.

O brethren! is not that a revelation of which, when we apprehend the depth and the preciousness, we may well fix an unalterable faith upon it, and feel that for us, in our fleeting days and shadowy moments, the one means to secure blessedness, rest, strength, life, is to grasp and knit ourselves to Him who lives forever, and whose love is lasting as His life? 'The eternal God, the Lord . . . fainteth not, neither is weary. They that wait upon Him shall renew their strength.'

The last thought suggested to me by this symbol is this. Regarding the lowly thorn-bush as an emblem of Israel—which unquestionably it is, though the fire be the symbol of God—in the fact that the symbolical manifestation of the divine energy lived in so lowly a shrine, and flamed in it, and preserved it by its burning, there is a great and blessed truth.

It is the same truth which Jesus Christ, with a depth of interpretation that put to shame the caviling listeners, found in the words that accompanied this vision: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' He said to the sneering Sadducees, who, like all other sneerers, saw only the surface of what they were sarcastic about, 'Did not Moses teach you,' in the section about the bush, 'that the dead rise, when he said: I AM the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob.' A man, about whom it can once be said that God is his God, cannot die. Such a bond can never be broken. The communion of earth, imperfect as it is, is the prophecy of Heaven and the pledge of immortality. And so from that relationship which subsisted between the fathers and God, Christ infers the certainty of their resurrection... Such communion is, in its very nature, unaffected by the accident of death, for it cannot be supposed that a man who can say that God is *His* God can be reduced to nothingness, and such a bond be snapped by such a cause. Therefore Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob are still living, 'for all' those whom we call dead, as well as those whom we call living, 'live unto Him,' and though so many centuries have passed, God still *is*, not *was*, their God. The relation between them is eternal and guarantees their immortal life...

That is but the fuller working out of the same truth that is taught us in the symbol 'the bush burned and was not consumed.' God dwelt in it, therefore it flamed; God dwelt in it, therefore though it flamed it never flamed out. Or in other words, the Church, the individual in whom He dwells, partakes of the immortality of the indwelling God. 'Everyone shall be salted with fire,' which shall be preservative and not destructive; or, as Christ has said, 'Because I live ye shall live also.'

Humble as was the little, ragged, sapless thorn-bush, springing up and living its solitary life amidst the sands of the desert, it was not too humble to hold God; it was not too gross to burst into flame when He came; it was not too fragile to be gifted with undying being; like His that abode in it. And for us each the emblem is true. If He dwell in us we shall live as long as He lives, and the fire that He puts in our heart shall be a fountain of fire springing up into life everlasting.

THE CALL OF MOSES (EXODUS 3:10-20)

The 'son of Pharaoh's daughter' had been transformed, by nearly forty years of desert life, into an Arab shepherd. The influences of the Egyptian court had faded from him, like color from cloth exposed to the weather; nor is it probable that, after the failure of his early attempt to play the deliverer to Israel, he nourished further designs of that sort. He appears to have settled down quietly to be Jethro's son-in-law, and to have lived a modest, still life of humble toil. He had flung away fair prospects... Looking after sheep in the desert was a sad downfall from the pos-

sibility of sitting on the throne of Egypt. Yes, but it was in the desert that the vision of the bush burning, and not burning out, came; and it would not have come if Moses had been in a palace...

'**I will send thee**' must have come like a thunder-clap. The commander's summons which brings a man from the rear rank and sets him in the van of a storming-party may well make its receiver shrink. It was not cowardice which prompted Moses' answer, but lowliness. His former impetuous confidence had all been beaten out of him. Time was when he was ready to take up the role of deliverer at his own hand; but these hot days were past, and age and solitude had mellowed him into humility. His recoil was but one instance of the shrinking which all true, devout men feel when designated for tasks which may probably make life short, and will certainly make it hard. All prophets and reformers till today have had the same feeling. Men who can do such work as the Jeremiahs, Pauls, Luthers, Cromwells, can do, are never forward to begin it.

Self-confidence is not the temper which God uses for His instruments. He works with 'bruised reeds,' and breathes His strength into them. It is when a man says 'I can do nothing,' that he is fit for God to employ. 'When I am weak, then I am strong.' Moses remembered enough of Egypt to know that it was no slight peril to front Pharaoh, and enough of Israel not to be particularly eager to have the task of leading them. There is no refusal of the charge, though there is profound consciousness of inadequacy. If we have reason to believe that any duty, great or small, is laid on us by God, it is wholesome that we should drive home to ourselves our own weakness...

God deals very gently with conscious weakness. 'Certainly I will be with thee.' Moses'

estimate of himself is quite correct, and it is the condition of his obtaining God's help. If he had been self-confident, he would have had no longing for, and no promise of, God's presence. In all our little tasks we may have the same assurance, and, whenever we feel that they are too great for us, the strength of that promise may be ours. God sends no man on errands which He does not give him power to do. So Moses had not to calculate the difference between his feebleness and the strength of a kingdom. Such arithmetic left out one element, which made all the difference in the sum total. 'Pharaoh *versus* Moses' did not look a very hopeful cause, but 'Pharaoh *versus* Moses and God—was a very different matter. God and I are always stronger than any antagonists. It was needless to discuss whether Moses was able to cope with the king. That was not the right way of putting the problem. The right way was, Is God able to do it? ...

One difficulty being solved, Moses raised another... The second question asked by Moses was eminently reasonable. He pictures to himself his addressing the Israelites, and their question, What is the name of this God who has sent you? Apparently the children of Israel had lost much of their ancestral faith, and probably had in many instances fallen into idolatry. We do not know enough to pronounce with confidence on that point, nor how far the great name of Jehovah had been used before the time of Moses, or had been forgotten in Egypt.

The questions connected with these points and with the history of the name do not enter into our present purpose. My task is rather to point out the religious significance of the self-revelation of God contained in the name, and how it becomes the foundation of Israel's deliverance, existence, and prerogatives. Whatever opinions are adopted as to the correct form of the name and other gram-

matical and philological questions, there is no doubt that it mainly reveals God as self-existent and unchangeable. He draws His being from no external source, nor 'borrows leave to be.' Creatures are what they are made or grow to be; they are what they were not; they are what they will some time not any more be. But He is what He is. Lifted above time and change, self-existing and self-determined, He is the fountain of life, the same forever.

This underived, independent, immutable being is a Person who can speak to men, and can say 'I am.' Being such, He has entered into close covenant relations with men, and has permitted Himself to be called 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' The name Jehovah lifts Him high above all creatures; the name 'the God of your fathers' brings Him into tender proximity with men, and, in combination with the former designation, guarantees that He will forever be what He has been, even to all generations of children's children. That mighty name is, indeed, His 'memorial to all generations,' and is as fresh and full of blessedness to us as to the patriarchs. Christ has made us understand more of the treasures for heart and mind and life which are stored in it. 'Our Father which art in heaven' is the unfolding of its inmost meaning...

As the desert shrub flamed, yet did not burn away, so that divine nature is not wearied by action nor exhausted by bestowing, nor has its life any tendency towards ending or extinction, as all creatural life has.

The closing verses of this passage are a program of Moses' mission, in which one or two points deserve notice. First, the general course of it is made known from the beginning. Therein Moses was blessed beyond most of God's servants, who have to risk much and to labor on, not knowing which

shall prosper. If we could see, as he did, the lie of the country beforehand, our journeys would be easier. So we often think, but we know enough of what shall be to enable us to have quiet hearts; and it is best for us not to see what is to fail and what to succeed. Our ignorance stimulates effort, and drives to clinging to God's hand.

Then we may note the full assurances to be given to the 'elders of Israel.' Apparently some kind of civic organization had been kept up, and there were principal people among the slaves who had to be galvanized first into enthusiasm. So they are to be told two things—that Jehovah has appeared to Moses, and that He, not Moses only, will deliver them and plant them in the land. The enumeration of the many tribes might discourage, but it is intended to fire by the thought of the breadth of the land, which is further described as fertile. The more exalted our conceptions of the inheritance, the more willing shall we be to enter on the pilgrimage towards it. The more we realize that Jehovah has promised to lead us, the more willing shall we be to face difficulties and dangers.

The directions as to the opening of communications with Pharaoh have often been made a difficulty, as if there was trickery in the modest request for permission to go three days' journey into the wilderness. But that request was to be made, knowing that it would not be granted. It was to be a test of Pharaoh's willingness to submit to Jehovah.

Its very smallness made it so more effectually. If he had any disposition to listen to the voice speaking through Moses, he would yield that small point. It is useless to speculate on what would have happened if he had done so. But probably the Israelites would have come back from their sacrificing.

Of more importance is it to note that the failure of the request was foreseen, and yet the effort was to be made. Is not that the same paradox which meets us in all the divine efforts to win over hard-hearted men to His service? Is it not exactly what our Lord did when He appealed to Judas, while knowing that all would be vain?

The expression in Ex. 3:19, 'not by a mighty hand,' is very obscure. It may possibly mean that Pharaoh was so obstinate that no human power was strong enough to bend his will. Therefore, in contrast to the 'mighty hand' of man, which was not mighty enough for this work, God will stretch out His hand, and that will suffice to compel obedience from the proudest. God can force men by His might to comply with His will, so far as external acts go; but He does not regard that as obedience, nor delight in it. We can steel ourselves against men's power, but God's hand can crush and break the strongest will. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' It is a blessed thing to put ourselves into them, in order to be molded by their loving touch. The alternative is laid before every soul of man.

What thought from Alexander MacLaren's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 3 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week from Exodus 3.

At the beginning of Exodus 3, Moses appears to be content. He is a simple shepherd in a simple land. He seems to have no longing to return to Egypt. He has no desire to relive his failures there. He has no sense of any personal responsibility toward alleviating the bondage of Israel in Egypt. Then, God interrupts his life...

In what ways has God “interrupted” your life? In what ways has He changed your plans?

Moses senses his inadequacy and weakness. His first question to God is “who am I?” “God, I can’t do what you have called me to do.” God’s response is not to give Moses a “pep talk” but to reveal who He is. It is not Moses’ strength but God’s strength that will enable him to complete the task.

Read and reflect on Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Our greatest need is not to feel better about ourselves but to gain a fresh vision of who God is.

What truth about God—what attribute of His character—encourages your heart today?

Listen to a song of worship and spend time reminding yourself who God is! He is the Great I AM!

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

*Moses said,
“Lord, I’m not adequate”
And the Lord said,
“No, but I am!”
He accepted Moses’ self-estimate
and graciously promised
his presence as adequate for
the inadequate man.*

J. Alec Motyer

*God is independent of all things.
He is perfectly self-sufficient,
not depending on anything outside
himself for anything, and is
therefore the eternal, foundational
being, the source of life and
sustenance for all other beings.*

John MacArthur, Jr.

*Whenever God means to make a
man great, He always breaks him
in pieces first.*

Charles H. Spurgeon

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- Talk about a time when God seemingly “interrupted” your life and changed your plans. What did you learn about God during this time?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 3? Why?
- Are you surprised that the same Moses who seemed so strong and confident in Exodus 2 is now a lowly shepherd with almost zero self-confidence? What do you think changed him?
- Look at all the “I” statements that God makes in this passage. Which one stands out to you the most? Why?
- What is significant about the name of God—I AM—Yahweh—He Is?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Alexander MacLaren? If so, what?
- In what ways are you feeling your inadequacy at this point in your life? What seems beyond your ability? What difficulty seems way too big to you? How does Exodus 3 encourage you? Pray together as a group for one another and spend time praising the character of God!

MAKING EXCUSES

Exodus 4

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Moses has encountered God and God has called him to deliver His people from Egypt. But Moses is not so convinced. He questions whether he is the right person for the task and wrestles against God's will.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 4. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'" ² The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." ³ And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. ⁴ But the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and catch it by the tail"—so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand— ⁵ "that they may believe that the Lord, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." ⁶ Again, the Lord said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. ⁷ Then God said, "Put your hand back inside your cloak." So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. ⁹ If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

¹⁰ But Moses said to the Lord, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue."

¹¹ Then the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? ¹² Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak." ¹³ But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else."

¹⁴ Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵ You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. ¹⁶ He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. ¹⁷ And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs."

¹⁸ Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." ¹⁹ And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead." ²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

²¹ And the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. ²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son,’ ²³ and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.”

²⁴ At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to kill him. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” ²⁶ So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.

²⁷ The Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸ And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. ²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. ³⁰ Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. (ESV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 4? Why?

In Exodus 3-4, Moses gives five objections (excuses) to the Lord’s call for him to deliver Israel. **Fill out the chart below.** The first two objections (in Exodus 3) are provided for you.

	Moses’ Objection	God’s Answer
3:11-12	<i>Who am I that I should deliver Israel?</i>	<i>I will certainly be with you.</i>
3:13-22	<i>If they ask who You are, what do I say?</i>	<i>I AM WHO I AM. Say, “I AM has sent you.”</i>
4:1-9		
4:10-12		
4:13-17		

What are the three signs that God gives Moses to perform?

1. _____ (4:3-4)
2. _____ (4:6-8)
3. _____ (4:9)

Why is the anger of the Lord aroused against Moses? (4:14)

Who goes with Moses on his journey back to Egypt? (4:20)

What does God say that He will do to Pharaoh when Moses shows him these signs? (4:21)

Write out what Moses is to say to Pharaoh when he returns to Egypt. (4:22-23)

One of the strangest scenes in the whole book of Exodus is in 4:24-26. Interpretations are varied. But at this stage of the study, make as many observations as you can from this passage.

Where does this event take place? _____

What does the Lord intend to do? _____

What does Zipporah (Moses' wife) do? _____

What does Zipporah say? _____

What do you think is happening here? What is the problem? And what is the solution?

When Moses and Aaron speak to the elders and perform the signs, how do they respond? (4:31)

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 4:10-12 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*But Moses pleaded with the Lord,
“O Lord, I’m not very good with words.
I never have been, and I’m not now,
even though you have spoken to me.
I get tongue-tied, and my words get tangled.”*

*Then the Lord asked Moses,
“Who makes a person’s mouth?
Who decides whether people speak or do not speak, hear or do not hear, see or do not see?
Is it not I, the Lord?
Now go! I will be with you as you speak, and I will instruct you in what to say.” (NLT)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Exodus 4:24-26 is a biblical story that mystifies most Bible readers and interpreters. Throughout history, among both Jews and Christians, there have been divided interpretations.

This passage is arguably the single most bizarre and baffling passage in all of the Hebrew Bible.
(Jonathan Kirsch)

Exodus 4:24-26 comprises possibly the most perplexing passage in all the Torah. (Ronald Allen)

Few texts contain more problems for the interpreter than these few verses which have continued to baffle throughout the centuries. (Brevard Childs)

Thus, it is wise to approach this passage with a measure of humility. But, at the same time, we should not shy away from this passage since there are lessons and truths that can be learned.

CONTEXT. Read the following verses before and after Exodus 4:24-26. Highlight or underline key words as you read. Note especially the word “son” and “firstborn.”

Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead.” Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. And the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn.”’” (Exodus 4:19-23)

.....

And the Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him. (Exodus 4:27)

KEY WORDS. Go to blueletterbible.org and type “Exodus 4” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on Exodus 4:19 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the word “sought” and click on the Strong’s number (H1245) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “sought”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How many times is it used in Exodus? _____ (See Search Results by Book.)

How many times is it used in Exodus 4:19-26? _____ (See Concordance Results.)

What is its definition? _____

Next go to Exodus 4:24 on blueletterbible.org. Find the phrase “met him” and click on the Strong’s number (H6298) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the OT.

What is the Hebrew word for “met”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How many times is it used in Exodus? _____ (See Search Results by Book.)

In what verses in Exodus is this word used? _____ (See Concordance Results.)

What is its definition? _____

THEOLOGY. Read Genesis 17:9-14 to understand the importance of circumcision.

And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” (Genesis 17:9-14)

Who is to be circumcised? _____

When is a male to be circumcised? _____

Why is a male to be circumcised? _____

What is the consequence of not being circumcised? _____

INTERPRETATION. Read Exodus 4:24-26 again. Mark key words or phrases as you read.

At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.

What stands out to you? _____

PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER. Here is a summary of some of the interpretative clues.

1. The context has a focus on the importance of the firstborn son. Moses' firstborn son was Gershom—born sometime after Moses became a sojourner in Midian (2:21-22).
2. Moses was free to return to Egypt because the men who *sought* to kill him were dead. But there was another person that Moses had to deal with who now *sought* to kill him—the Lord Himself! Moses apparently had more fear of the lords in Egypt than the Lord of the universe.
3. The Lord *met* Moses and then Moses *met* Aaron. These two meetings are connected together and seem to indicate that the Lord met Moses in a personal way (perhaps in bodily form) and that He had to break Moses' will before Moses was ready to meet Aaron and do God's will.
4. Obedience to the rite of circumcision is central to the passage.

Based on what you have read and studied so far, answer the following questions:

Was Gershom, Moses' firstborn son, circumcised? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

Whom do you think the Lord would have held most responsible for this situation?

☐ Moses ☐ Zipporah ☐ Gershom ☐ Jethro

What do you think Zipporah's attitude was toward circumcision? (Note: She is not Jewish.)

☐ Positive ☐ Neutral ☐ Negative

How do you think this situation impacted Moses' and Zipporah's relationship?

☐ Made it closer ☐ No impact ☐ Made it more tense

Why do you think Moses kindled the Lord's anger again so that his life was in jeopardy?

☐ He stopped at the wrong hotel. ☐ He failed to ask Zipporah for directions.
☐ He was not travelling fast enough. ☐ He failed to obey God's command.

Exodus 4:24-26 is one of those strange Bible passages that often gets ignored or even ridiculed but it teaches us several important points.

- **Obedience is essential for *all* God's servants.** Moses did not get a free pass on obeying God.
- **Obedience begins at home.** Moses failed to lead his family well and it almost cost him his life.
- **Obedience brings struggle.** Moses' reluctance to circumcise Gershom probably reflected his reluctance to return to Egypt. He was still wrestling against the Lord's will and the Lord had to break him in some way. This whole episode apparently created tension in his marriage as Zipporah and their sons return to Midian and do not accompany Moses to Egypt. The next time we see them is in Exodus 18 when Jethro brings them to meet Moses in the wilderness.

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures. Charles Spurgeon stated that, "Every minister ought to read it entirely and carefully through once at least."

EXODUS 4:1-9

It was a very great honor that Moses was called to when God commissioned him to bring Israel out of Egypt; yet he is with difficulty persuaded to accept the commission, and does it at last with great reluctance...

I. Moses objects that in all probability the people would not *hearken to his voice* (v. 1), that is, they would not take his bare word, unless he showed them some sign, which he had not been yet instructed to do. This objection cannot be justified, because it contradicts what God had said, *They shall hearken to thy voice* (3:18). If God says, *They will*, does it become Moses to say, *They will not*? ...If there should be some gainsayers among them who would question his commission, how should he deal with them? And what course should he take to convince them? He remembered how they had once rejected him, and feared it would be so again. Note: Present discouragements often arise from former disappointments...

II. God empowers him to work miracles, directs him to three particularly, two of which were now immediately wrought for his own satisfaction. Note: True miracles are the most convincing external proofs of a divine mission attested by them. Therefore our Savior often appealed to his works (as Jn. 5:36), and Nicodemus owns himself convinced by them, Jn. 3:2. And here Moses, having a special commission given him as a judge and lawgiver to Israel, has this seal affixed to his commission, and comes supported by these credentials.

1. The rod in his hand is made the subject of a miracle, a double miracle: it is but thrown out of his hand and it becomes a serpent; he resumes it and it becomes a rod again, v. 2-4. Now, here was a divine power manifested in the change itself, that a dry stick should be turned into a living serpent, a lively one, so formidable a one that Moses himself, on whom, it should seem, it turned in some threatening manner, *fled from before it*, though we may suppose, in that desert, serpents were no strange things to him; but what was produced miraculously was always the best and strongest of the kind, as the water turned to wine: and, then, that this living serpent should be turned into a dry stick again, this was the Lord's doing...

2. His hand itself is next made the subject of a miracle. He puts it once into his bosom, and takes it out leprous; he puts it again into the same place, and takes it out well, v. 6-7. This signified, that Moses, by the power of God, should bring sore diseases upon Egypt, and that, at his prayer, they should be removed... Note: God is abundantly willing to show the truth of his word, and is not sparing in his proofs; the multitude and variety of the miracles corroborate the evidence.

3. He is directed, when he comes to Egypt, to turn some of the water of the river into blood, v. 9. This was done, at first, as a sign, but, not gaining due credit with Pharaoh, the whole river was afterwards turned into blood, and then it became a plague. He is ordered to work this miracle in case they would not be convinced by the other two. Note: Unbelief shall be left inexcusable, and convicted of a willful obstinacy. As to the people of Israel,

God had said (3:18), *They shall hearken*; yet he appoints these miracles to be wrought for their conviction, for he that has ordained the end has ordained the means.

EXODUS 4:10-17

Moses still continues backward to the service for which God had designed him, even to a fault; for now we can no longer impute it to his humility and modesty, but must own that here was too much of cowardice, slothfulness, and unbelief in it.

I. Moses endeavors to excuse himself.

1. **He pleads that he was no good spokesman:** *O my Lord! I am not eloquent*, v. 10. He was a great philosopher, statesman, and divine, and yet no orator; a man of a clear head, great thought, and solid judgment, but had not a voluble tongue, or ready utterance, and therefore he thought himself unfit to speak before great men about great affairs, and in danger of being run down by the Egyptians. We must not judge of men by the readiness and fluency of their discourse. Moses was *mighty in word* (Acts 7:22), and yet not eloquent: what he said was strong and nervous, and to the purpose, and distilled as the dew (Deut. 32:2), though he did not deliver himself with that readiness, ease, and elegance, that some do, who have not the tenth part of his sense. St. Paul's speech was contemptible, 2 Cor. 10:10. A great deal of wisdom and true worth is concealed by a slow tongue. Note: God is pleased sometimes to make choice of those as his messengers who have fewest of the advantages of art or nature, that his grace in them may appear the more glorious. Christ's disciples were no orators, till the Spirit made them such...

2. **He begged that God would send somebody else.** *Send by any hand but mine; thou canst certainly find one much more fit.* Note:

An unwilling mind will take up with a sorry excuse rather than none, and is willing to devolve those services upon others that have anything of difficulty or danger in them.

II. **How God condescends to answer all his excuses.** Though *the anger of the Lord was kindled against him* (v. 14), yet he continued to reason with him, till he had overcome him. Note...God is justly displeased with those whom yet he does not reject: he vouchsafes to reason the case even with his stubborn children, and overcomes them, as he did Moses here, with grace and kindness.

1. **To balance the weakness of Moses, he here reminds him of his own power**, v. 11. His power in that concerning which Moses made the objection: *Who has made man's mouth? Have not I the Lord?* Moses knew that God made man, but he must be reminded now that God made man's mouth. An eye to God as Creator would help us over a great many of the difficulties which lie in the way of our duty. God, as the author of nature, has given us the power and faculty of speaking; and from him, as the fountain of gifts and graces, comes the faculty of speaking well... The perfections of our faculties are his work, he makes the *seeing*; he formed the eye (Ps. 94:9); he opens the understanding, the eye of the mind, Luke 24:45. Their imperfections are from him too; he makes the *dumb*, and *deaf*, and *blind*. Is there any weakness of this kind, and the Lord has not done it? No doubt he has, and always in wisdom and righteousness, and for his own glory, John 9:3...

2. **To encourage him in this great undertaking, he repeats the promise of his presence**, not only in general, *I will be with thee* (3:12), but in particular, *I will be with thy mouth*, so that the imperfection in thy speech shall be no prejudice to thy message. It does not appear that God did immediately remove the infirmity, whatever it was; but he did that

which was equivalent, he taught him what to say, and then let the matter recommend itself: if others spoke more gracefully, none spoke more powerfully. Note: Those whom God employs to speak for him ought to depend upon him for instructions, and *it shall be given them what they shall speak*, Mt. 10:19.

3. He joins Aaron in commission with him. He promises that Aaron shall meet him opportunely, and that he will be glad to see him, they having not seen one another (it is likely) for many years. He directs him to make use of Aaron as his spokesman. God might have laid Moses wholly aside, for his backwardness to be employed; but he considered his frame, and ordered him an assistant. Note: Two are better than one, Eccl. 4:9. God will have his two witnesses (Rev. 11:3), that out of their mouths every word may be established. Aaron was the brother of Moses, divine wisdom so ordering it, that their natural affection one to another might strengthen their union in the joint execution of their commission. Christ sent his disciples two and two, and some of the pairs were brothers. Aaron was the elder brother, and yet he was willing to be employed under Moses in this affair, because God would have it so.

Aaron could speak well, and yet was far inferior to Moses in wisdom. God dispenses his gifts variously to the children of men, that we may see our need one of another, and each may contribute something to the good of the body, 1 Cor. 12:21. The tongue of Aaron, with the head and heart of Moses, would make one completely fit for this embassy...

4. He bids him take the rod with him in his hand... *Take this rod*, the rod he carried as a shepherd, that he might not be ashamed of that lowly condition out of which God called him. This rod must be his staff of authority, instead of a sword or a scepter.

EXODUS 4:18-23

I. Moses obtains leave of his father-in-law to return into Egypt. His father-in-law had been kind to him when he was a stranger, and therefore he would not be so uncivil as to leave his family, nor so unjust as to leave his service, without giving him notice. Note: The honor of being admitted into communion with God, and of being employed for him, does not exempt us from the duties of our relations and callings in this world. Moses said nothing to his father-in-law (for aught that appears) of the glorious manifestation of God to him; such favors we are to be thankful for to God, but not to boast of before men.

II. He receives from God further encouragements and directions in his work. After God had appeared to him in the bush to settle a correspondence, it should seem, he often spoke to him, as there was occasion, with less overwhelming solemnity.

1. He assures Moses that the coasts were clear. Whatever new enemies he might make by his undertaking, his old enemies were *all dead, all that sought his life*. Perhaps some secret fear of falling into their hands was at the bottom of Moses's reluctance to go to Egypt, though he was not willing to own it, but pleaded unworthiness, insufficiency, lack of eloquence. Note: God knows all the temptations his people lie under, and how to arm them against their secret fears, Ps. 142:3...

2. He reveals Pharaoh's obstinacy so that it might be no surprise nor discouragement to him. God tells him before that he would *harden his heart*. Pharaoh had hardened his own heart against the groans and cries of the oppressed Israelites, and shut up the bowels of his compassion from them; and now God, in a way of righteous judgment, hardens his heart against the conviction of the miracles, and the terror of the plagues. Note:

Ministers must expect with many to labor in vain: we must not think it strange if we meet with those who will not be wrought upon by the strongest arguments and fairest reasonings; yet our judgment is with the Lord.

3. Words are put into his mouth with which to address Pharaoh. He must deliver his message in the name of the great Jehovah: *Thus saith the Lord*; this is the first time that preface is used by any man which afterwards is used so frequently by all the prophets: whether Pharaoh will hear, or whether he will forbear, Moses must tell him, *Thus saith the Lord*. He must let Pharaoh know Israel's relation to God, and God's concern for Israel. *Is Israel a servant? Is he a home-born slave?* No, *Israel is my son, my firstborn, precious in my sight, honorable*, and dear to me, not to be thus insulted and abused...

III. Moses addresses himself to this expedition. When God had assured him that the men were dead who sought his life, immediately it follows, *he took his wife, and his sons*, and set out for Egypt. Note: Though corruption may object much against God's call, yet grace will get the upper hand...

EXODUS 4:24-31

Moses is going to Egypt, and we are told:

I. How God met him in anger, v. 24-26. This is a very difficult passage. Much has been written to make it intelligible; we will try to make it instructive.

1. The sin of Moses, which was neglecting to circumcise his son. This was probably the effect of his being unequally yoked with a Midianite, who was too indulgent of her child, while Moses was too indulgent of her. Note: We have need to watch carefully over our own hearts, lest fondness for any relation prevail above our love to God, and take us off

from our duty to him. Consider also that even good men are apt to cool in their zeal for God and duty when they have long been deprived of the society of the faithful: solitude has its advantages, but they seldom counterbalance the loss of Christian communion.

2. God's displeasure against him. He met him, and, probably by a sword in an angel's hand, sought to kill him. This was a great change; very lately God was conversing with him, and lodging a trust in him, as a friend; and now he is coming forth against him as an enemy. Note: Omissions are sins, and must come into judgment, and particularly the contempt and neglect of the seals of the covenant; for it is a sign that we undervalue the promises of the covenant, and are displeased with the conditions of it. He that has made a bargain, and is not willing to seal and ratify it, one may justly suspect, neither likes it nor designs to stand to it. God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sins of his own people. If they neglect their duty, let them expect to hear of it by their consciences, and perhaps to feel from it by cross providences: for this cause many are sick and weak as some think Moses was here.

3. The speedy performance of the duty. His son must be circumcised; Moses is unable to do it; therefore, in this case of necessity, Zipporah does it with passionate words (expressing her dislike of the ordinance itself or at least the administration of it)... From this we learn that when God discovers to us what is amiss in our lives we must give all diligence to amend it speedily, and particularly return to the duties we have neglected. The putting away of our sins is indispensably necessary to the removal of God's judgments. This is the voice of every rod, it calls to us to return to him that smites us.

4. The release of Moses thereupon: *So he let him go*; the distemper went off, the

destroying angel withdrew, and all was well: only Zipporah cannot forget the fright she was in, but will unreasonably call Moses *a bloody husband*, because he obliged her to circumcise the child; and, upon this occasion (it is probable), he sent them back to his father-in-law, that they might not create him any further uneasiness. Note: When we return to God in a way of duty he will return to us in a way of mercy; take away the cause, and the effect will cease. We must resolve to bear it patiently, even if our zeal for God and his institutions be misinterpreted and discouraged by some that should understand themselves...

II. How Aaron met him in love, v. 27-28.

1. **God sent Aaron to meet him**, and directed him where to find him, in the wilderness that lay towards Midian. Note: The providence of God is to be acknowledged in the comfortable meeting of relations and friends.

2. **Aaron made so much haste**, in obedience to his God, and in love to his brother, that he met him *in the mount of God*, the place where God had met with him.

3. **They embraced one another with mutual endearments**. The more they saw of God's immediate direction in bringing them together the more pleasant their interview

was: they *kissed*, not only in token of brotherly affection, and in remembrance of ancient acquaintance, but as a pledge of their hearty concurrence in the work to which they were jointly called.

4. **Moses informed his brother of the commission he had received**, with all the instructions and credentials affixed to it. Note: What we know of God we should communicate for the benefit of others; and those that are fellow-servants to God in the same work should use a mutual freedom, and endeavor rightly and fully to understand one another.

III. **How the elders of Israel met him in faith and obedience**. When Moses and Aaron first opened their commission in Egypt, said what they were ordered to say, and, to confirm it, did what they were ordered to do, they met with a better reception than they promised themselves, v. 29-31. The Israelites gave credit to them: *The people believed*, as God had foretold (3:18), knowing that no man could do those works that they did, unless God were with him. They gave glory to God: *They bowed their heads and worshipped*, therein expressing not only their humble thankfulness to God, who had raised them up and sent them a deliverer, but also their cheerful readiness to observe orders, and pursue the methods of their deliverance.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE

APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 4 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week from Exodus 4.

Exodus 4 is a chapter of excuses. Moses is called to a task by the Lord but he finds a multitude of reasons to dismiss and reject God’s call. *Who am I to do this? Do I really know who You are? What if they don’t believe me? Don’t You know I’m not the best speaker? Can’t You send someone else?*

Moses’ excuses are not much different than our own. If we struggle with fear or simply do not want to do something then we will find a reason to evade, avoid, elude, or refuse the task.

Next to the task below, write down some good excuses that you could use for not doing it.

The Task	Possible Excuses
<i>Reading your Bible and praying on a daily basis</i>	
<i>Sharing your faith with a neighbor or friend</i>	
<i>Giving to a ministry or charity</i>	
<i>Forgiving someone</i>	
<i>Seeking reconciliation with someone in your family or church</i>	
<i>Stopping a sin or habit that is hindering your relationship with the Lord and with others</i>	
<i>Being honest and confessing a sin</i>	
<i>Serving in a ministry or task that you sense God is calling you to</i>	

Which of these excuses seems to hit home the most? Why?

Read Romans 12:1-21 thoughtfully and prayerfully. Mark key words and phrases as you read.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

⁹ Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰ Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹¹ Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. ¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. ¹³ Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

What do you need to do today in light of God's Word? _____

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.

Benjamin Franklin

Excuses change nothing, but make everyone feel better.

Mason Cooley

Cherish the lowliest thought you choose of yourself, but unite it with the loftiest conception of God's All-Sufficiency.

F. B. Meyer

God's Word, God's rule, God's teaching, God's deliverance come not from man, no matter who that man may be, but from God.

John Durham

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be? Why? How could God accomplish His plan through you without changing this one thing?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 4? Why?
- Which of Moses' objections and excuses stands out to you the most? Why?
- Why do you think God's anger was not kindled until Moses made his last excuse?
- What did you learn about Ex. 4:24-26 from this study? What questions do you still have?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Together as a group discuss the list of tasks and excuses on page 58. Which task and excuse seemed to hit home the most in your own life? Why?
- Pray together as a group and commit to helping each other in your walk with the Lord!

God called to him out of the midst
of the bush, and said,
"Moses! Moses!"

He said,
"Here
I
am"

God said,
"Don't come close.
Take your sandals
off of your feet,

for the place you are standing on is
HOLY GROUND
EXODUS 3:4-5, 14



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MAKING THINGS WORSE

Exodus 5

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Moses and Aaron met with the elders of Israel and the response was very positive. They are probably feeling good about their prospects of success. But when they meet with Pharaoh, things do not go so well.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 5 (ESV). Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”² But Pharaoh said, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.”³ Then they said, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.”⁴ But the king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.”⁵ And Pharaoh said, “Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!”

⁶ The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen,⁷ “You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves.”⁸ But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, ‘Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God.’⁹ Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.”

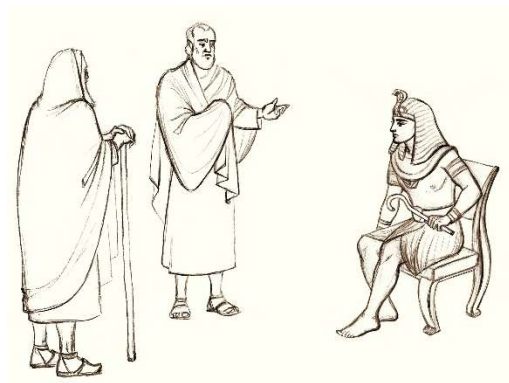
¹⁰ So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people, “Thus says Pharaoh, ‘I will not give you straw.’¹¹ Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.”¹² So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw.¹³ The taskmasters were urgent, saying, “Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.”¹⁴ And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh’s taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, “Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?”

¹⁵ Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, “Why do you treat your servants like this?¹⁶ No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks!’ And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.”¹⁷ But he said, “You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.’¹⁸ Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still deliver the same number of bricks.”¹⁹ The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, “You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.”²⁰ They met Moses and Aaron, who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh;²¹ and they said to them, “The Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.”

²² Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, “O Lord, why have you done evil to this people? Why did you ever send me? ²³ For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has done evil to this people, and you have not delivered your people at all.”

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 5? Why?

Write out what Moses and Aaron say to Pharaoh in their first statement to him. (5:1)



What is Pharaoh's response? (5:2)

Moses and Aaron seem to be taken back by Pharaoh's vehement refusal and they try to soften their tone.

What differences do you see in their second statement? (5:3) _____

Instead of letting the Israelites go, Pharaoh doubles their workload! He sees Moses and Aaron as trouble-makers trying to get the people a day off work. In response, Pharaoh forces the Israelites to gather straw as well as make the same quota of bricks. The people are stressed and in despair.

How does Pharaoh respond to the foremen of the people who ask for some leniency? (5:17)

What is the Israelite's attitude toward Moses and Aaron now? (5:20-21)

What is Moses' attitude toward God now? (5:22-23) _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 5:22-23 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*Then Moses went back to the Lord and protested,
“Why have you brought all this trouble on your own people, Lord?
Why did you send me?
Ever since I came to Pharaoh as your spokesman,
he has been even more brutal to your people.
And you have done nothing to rescue them!” (NLT)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Have you ever felt like Moses felt? Spend time reflecting on your own doubts and struggles and then offer up a prayer to the Lord, asking for His wisdom and strength.

DAY THREE

INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Moses and Aaron come into Pharaoh's throne room with great boldness but they are quickly shot down. **Compare what God told Moses to say and do and what he actually said and did.**

"You and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'" (3:18)

Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" (5:1)

What differences do you see? _____

Read what Moses and Aaron say after Pharaoh's outright rejection of their initial statement.

Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword." (5:3)

How does this second statement compare to God's original wording? What do they get right? What do they add or subtract?

Moses and Aaron, probably with a great deal of exuberance and confidence after their meeting with the elders of Israel (4:29-31), seem to go before Pharaoh in their own strength, taking a more confrontational, direct approach than the one that God had directed them to take. Then, after recovering from the initial shock of Pharaoh's outright refusal, they try to take a softer tone. But, in both cases, they make their own variations to the Lord's original statement.

Read what the Lord told Moses would happen when he approached Pharaoh.

But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. (3:19-20)

And the Lord said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go." (4:21)

Based on what God had told Moses, what should Moses have expected from Pharaoh?

Moses apparently went before Pharaoh with different expectations. He seems to have thought that the Lord would move more quickly and make the path easier than it was. Instead, after going to Pharaoh, the situation gets worse—much worse—for the Israelites and for Moses and Aaron.

Pharaoh doubles the Israelites workload because he accuses them of being “idle.”

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “Exodus 5” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on Exodus 5:17 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the word “idle” and click on the Strong’s number (H7503) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is the Hebrew word for “idle”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially the Outline of Biblical Usage and Gesenius’ Lexicon.)

Read the following passages which use this same Hebrew word. Mark key words as you read.

*And Joshua said to the Israelites, “How long will you **be slack** about going to take possession of the land that Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, has given you?” (Joshua 18:3)*

*“But you, take courage! Do not let your hands **be weak**, for your work shall be rewarded.” (2 Chr. 15:7)*

*For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will **drop** from the work, and it will not be done.” But now, O God, strengthen my hands. (Nehemiah 6:9)*

***Let go** of anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it surely leads to evil deeds. (Psalm 37:4)*

***Be still**, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth. (Psalm 46:10)*

*Keep hold of instruction; do not **let go**; guard her, for she is your life. (Proverbs 4:13)*

This Hebrew word has a rich meaning and can be used both positively and negatively. **What are the things that we should take firm grip of and what are the things we should let go of?**

DAY FOUR

DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from F.B. Meyer's, *Moses: the Servant of God*. **F.B. Meyer** (1847-1929) was a Baptist pastor and evangelist in England. A good friend of the evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, Meyer served in missionary work around the world and played a key part in many great revivals.

THE INTERVIEW WITH THE ELDERS

It must have been a very remarkable meeting, perhaps the first of the sort ever held. Never before had this downtrodden nation produced men daring enough to take such a step, the first, indeed, towards national autonomy.

We are not told whether there was any disposition on the part of any of these elders, who were probably the heads of the Hebrew families and tribes, to question the right of the brothers (Moses and Aaron) to convene them. In all likelihood, they were but too glad to merge all prior and selfish claims in a united effort on their people's behalf; and there were probably many stories afloat of Moses' life and deeds, before his strange and sudden self-expatriation, which predisposed them to obey his call, and gather at some convenient spot within the territory allotted to them to inhabit.

When all were gathered Aaron recited on the behalf of Moses, who probably stood beside him without a word, the magnificent words spoken at the bush (3:16-22).

At this juncture the brothers would probably give the signs with which God had provided them; the serpent changed into a rod; the leprous hand made natural and whole; the water of the river becoming blood as it was poured out upon the land. These won conviction; and from that meeting the tidings spread throughout the nation, whispered from hut to hut, told in under-breaths from slave to slave among the brick kilns.

And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped. (4:31)

THE AUDIENCE WITH PHARAOH

The next point for the brothers was to go to Pharaoh, with the demand that he should let the people go to hold a feast in the wilderness. This was according to Divine direction; and was moreover a reasonable request. So fastidious a people as the Egyptians could well understand how Israel would prefer to carry out their rites apart from the inspection of strangers, and the contagion of the predominant religious cult surrounding them. Besides, it was like asking for a brief holiday, after an unbroken spell of centuries of incessant toil. It did not set forth all they wanted; but inasmuch as it was a foregone conclusion that Pharaoh would grant nothing, even care was taken to deprive him of the excuse of saying that their demands were preposterous.

It was probably in an audience-room of some splendid palace, where the lordly Pharaoh received deputations and embassies, that they met him. How mixed must Moses' feelings have been, entering as a suppliant the precincts in which he had played no inconspicuous part in those buried years! And then Aaron and he uttered the words, which pealed as a thunder-clap through the audience, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness."

To appreciate the audacity of the demand, we must remember the unbridled power and authority which were claimed by the Egyptian monarchs. Each Pharaoh was the child of the sun. He is depicted as fondled by the greatest gods, and sitting with them in the recesses of their temples to receive worship equal to their own. "By the life of Pharaoh," was the supreme oath. Without Pharaoh could no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. For him great Egypt existed. For him all other men

lived, suffered, and died. For him the mighty Nile flowed from its unexplored fountains to fructify the soil. For him vast armies of priests, magicians, and courtiers, wrought and ministered. From his superb throne he looked down on the wretched crowds of subject peoples, careless of their miseries. What were their tears and groans, and the wail of their bondage, but a fitting sacrifice to be offered to his exalted majesty!

In addition, the present monarch had recently achieved certain great victories; and these successes had greatly enhanced his arrogant pride, so that it was in a paroxysm of supercilious scorn that he answered the Divine demand: "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go."

The point of the reply lies in that word obey.

He saw that these men did not present him with a request, but with a mandate from One of greater authority than himself. This stung him to the quick. He also was a god. Who was this other God, stronger than himself, who dared to issue such a summons! A God of whose existence till that moment he had been unaware! The God of a parcel of slaves! How dare they speak of their paltry Deity in his presence, and in the midst of priests, courtiers, and high officers of state!

The brothers met this outburst with a reiteration of their message, telling how the God of the Hebrews had met with them; and requesting, in a softer tone, that they might be permitted to do as He had enjoined. But the king refused to believe that their plea was genuine; and insisted on regarding the whole matter as a desire to escape from their labors, as a plea for idleness.

Turning sharply on the two brethren, he accused them of hindering their people's toils, and bade them begone to their own share in the clay-pit, or the brick-kiln: "Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens."

What a bitter taunt there was in that last sentence! How the royal lip curled as it was uttered! Already the heart had begun to harden! And so the audience ended, and the brothers came down the crowded corridors amid the titter of the court.

FAILURE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

That same day a new order was issued from the palace, emanating from Pharaoh himself, to the taskmasters of the people. And probably, ere the evening fell, the ominous word had passed from the task masters to the head-men who were set over their fellow Hebrews, and were, therefore, responsible for the daily delivery of a certain tale of bricks, that they must expect no more straw, though the daily returns must be maintained. "Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw; go ye, get you straw where ye can find it. Yet not ought of your work shall be diminished."

Then ensued a time of awful anguish.

The Hebrew head-men told some of the people to scatter themselves over the country, collecting straw from every quarter, and to do it with all haste.

And in the meantime they urged on the rest of the people to compensate for the absence of the straw-gatherers by their added energy. Every nerve was strained to the uttermost. From early morning to the last ray of light the whole nation sought to do the impossible beneath the scorching sun, and with never a moment's pause. And yet as the tale of bricks was counted it fell inevitably short. In vain did the taskmasters haste them, saying, "Fulfil your works, your daily tasks, as when there was straw."

In vain were the officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, beaten, and such beating as they would get might mean death. It was as when a whole crew, stripped to the waist, works at the pumps; but they cannot pump out the water as quickly as it pours in; the water-line will not fall, and at

length drowning is preferable to the agonized suspense.

Finally, they could stand it no longer, and resolved to make an appeal direct to Pharaoh. "The officers of the children of Israel came and cried unto Pharaoh" (v. 15).

It was a bitter day for the two brothers when the people took the matter into their own hands, and, without using them as intermediaries, went direct to the king to get him to put them back to the point at which they stood before that well-meant, but disastrous interference. But it was evidently better that Moses and Aaron should wait outside the palace to learn the result of the interview (v. 20).

It happened just as it might have been expected, the king would not listen to the appeal made to him. "He said, Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord. Go therefore now, and work; for there shall no straw be given to you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks" (v. 17-18).

He may have referred again sarcastically to the "vain words" (v. 9) on which the brothers had caused them to hope. So they came forth from Pharaoh, at the very extreme of agony, dreading the lingering death from exhaustion and stripes, which apparently awaited their whole nation; and as Moses and Aaron stood there they poured on them the bitterness of their spirit. What must it not have been for them to hear from those lips the bitterest reproaches they could frame, cutting them as knives, although they would have gladly given their lives to alleviate the circumstances out of which they sprang?

"The Lord look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savor to stink in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword into their hand to slay us."

As we look back on that scene, we can somewhat understand the reason for it all. God can

afford to bring us through passages like this, because of "the afterward" to which they lead.

It was necessary that Moses, Aaron, and the Hebrews, should come to see that their case was desperate, and that no appeals or reasonings or remonstrances could alter it.

It was necessary that the leaders should be weaned from the enthusiastic loyalty of the people, that they might lean only on the arm of the living God, and venture forth depending on Him alone.

It was necessary that the people should see that they could not better their position by any efforts of their own.

THE RESORT OF THE BAFFLED SOUL

"And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? Why is it that Thou hast sent me?"

When we see our hopes blasted, our plans miscarry, our efforts do more harm than good, whilst we are discredited and blamed, pursued with the taunts and hate of those for whom we were willing to lay down our lives, we may preserve an outward calm; but there will be a heartbreak underneath, and the noblest part in us will wither, as corn blasted by an east wind, unless we are able to pour out our whole complaint before God.

The agony of soul through which Moses passed must have been as death to him.

He died to his self-esteem,

He died to his kingdom-building,

He died to pride in his miracles,

He died to the enthusiasm of his people,

He died to everything that a popular leader loves.

As he lay there on the ground alone before God, wishing himself back in Midian, and thinking himself hardly used, he was falling as a corn of wheat into the ground to die, no longer to abide alone, but to bear much fruit.

Ah, but dying is not pleasant work!

It is not easy nor pleasant to forego one's own plans, to cease from one's own works, to renounce one's own reputation, to be despised and flouted by the very slaves you would save. What corn of wheat enjoys having its waterproof sheath torn from it, its elements disintegrated, its heart eaten into, as it lies helpless, exposed to the earth-forces, in the cold, damp, dark soil? And yet this is the necessary condition which must be fulfilled, ere it can put forth the slender stalk, like a hand holding to the sun thirty, sixty, or a hundred grains like itself.

"That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; ...but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

It is a lesson for us all.

God must bring us down before He can raise us up. Emptying must precede filling. We must get to an end of ourselves before He can begin in us.

But what a beginning He makes!

"Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now thou shalt see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land" (Exodus 6:1).

And as those words of encouragement and promise broke on his ear, he must have forgotten the averted looks and bitter words of the people, and risen into a new world of restful expectation. Deliverance was sure, though he had learned that it did not depend on anything that he could do, but on that all-sufficient God, who had announced Himself as the I AM.

And out of the whole story there comes to us this lesson: we must never suppose that the difficulties which confront us indicate that we are not on God's path, and doing his work.

Indeed the contrary is generally the case. If we are willing to walk with God, He will test the sincerity and temper of our soul; He will cause men to ride over our heads; He will bring us through fire and through water. But out of all He will bring us into a large room, and give us the very thing on which we have been taught to set our hearts.

The further banks of the Red Sea with their song of victory will wipe out the memory of those bitter disappointments, those sharp speeches, those hours of lonely anguish.

What thought from F. B. Meyer's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 5 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week from Exodus 5.

In Exodus 5, Moses faces rejection, failure, discouragement, and doubt. He went before Pharaoh with an expectation of victory and came out licking his wounds. Plus, his efforts ended up creating greater pain and anguish for the people of Israel. He tried to help and only made things worse.

Have you ever tried to do something for the Lord or make a good choice and ended up making things worse in some way? If so, then how did this whole episode in your life impact you?

There seem to be two factors at play in Moses' failure and discouragement in Exodus 5.

- 1. The wrong approach.** It appears that Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh with a more direct confrontation, and possibly more of an "in your face" attitude, than what the Lord had originally instructed them (3:18). Perhaps they thought that Pharaoh would only respond to a more powerful, direct approach. Maybe they thought they had to "fight fire with fire." But whatever the case, their approach did not work and seems to have caused them to fumble a little bit in Pharaoh's presence. Sometimes in our zeal, self-confidence, or desire to be more bold, strong, or confrontational, we create more problems than are necessary.

Read the following verses. Mark key words and phrases as you read.

*The wise of heart is called discerning,
And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness. (Proverbs 16:21)*

*The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,
But the lips of a fool shall swallow him up. (Ecclesiastes 10:12)*

Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one. (Colossians 4:5-6)

How is your tone when you speak to people? What would others say about the general tone and attitude of your words? If you really want to know, then ask those closest to you 😊.

- 2. The wrong expectation.** The Lord had already revealed to Moses that Pharaoh would harden his heart and not listen. Yet it seems that Moses is somewhat shocked by Pharaoh's response and the harsh treatment that follows. His prayer to the Lord in Exodus 5:22-23 implies that Moses expected a quick, easy deliverance with no major speed bumps along the way. This kind of expectation is something that all of us can have at times. We expect God to work quickly. We expect the road to be easy. We don't expect that things can actually get worse when we commit ourselves to following the Lord.

Read the following verses. Mark key words and phrases as you read.

You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:11-12)

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world. (John 16:33)

Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you, as if something unusual were happening to you. Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. If you are ridiculed for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. (1 Peter 4:12-14)

What expectations do you carry when it comes to following the Lord? Take time to think through your own discouragement. Behind this discouragement is often an unmet expectation.

What do the verses above tell us that we should expect in following the Lord?

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Discouragement comes when we say what God will do—that God will always keep me healthy, that He will always be bringing me into the land of Canaan where I will eat honey.

Well, He won't.

God is concerned about only one thing—getting me into a personal relationship with Himself. There is no possibility of discouragement if we will only remember that this is the relationship—not God's blessings, but Himself.

Oswald Chambers

Moses adopted an authoritarian approach, alienating Pharaoh with incomprehensible talk and an absolute demand. When we sit loose to the Word of God, when we subtract what it does say and contribute what it does not, we doom ourselves to reap failure and disappointment.

J. Alec Motyer

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- When have you been tempted to think that *not* following God would be easier or better?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 5? Why?
- What differences do you see in what God told Moses to say and do (3:18) and what he actually said and did? Do you think these differences are significant? Why or why not?
- What are your impressions of Pharaoh from this first encounter?
- What do you think Moses and Aaron are thinking after they make things worse for the Israelites after this encounter? What would you be thinking after getting reamed by the Israelite foremen and realizing that you have multiplied the suffering of many people?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of F. B. Meyer? If so, what?
- Think of the last time you faced discouragement in your Christian walk. What unmet expectation was behind your discouragement? Was this expectation realistic or biblical?
- Take your discouragements and doubts to the Lord as you pray together as a group.

GETTING BACK TO THE TASK

Exodus 6:1-7:7

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Moses is discouraged. God did not do what he expected and the plight of the Israelites worsened. But God reassures Moses and reminds him of His covenant promises. Though Moses is still struggling, he gets back on task.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 6:1-7:7. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”

² And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am the Lord. ³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name Lord I was not known to them. ⁴ I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. ⁵ And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. ⁶ Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. ⁸ And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the Lord.’” ⁹ So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.

¹⁰ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ “Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land.” ¹² And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, “Behold, the children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?” ¹³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a command for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ These are the heads of their fathers’ houses: The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. ¹⁵ And the sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi were one hundred and thirty-seven. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon were Libni and Shimi according to their families. ¹⁸ And the sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath were one hundred and thirty-three. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of Levi according to their generations.

²⁰ Now Amram took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven. ²¹ The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. ²² And the sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. ²³ Aaron took to himself Eli-sheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ²⁴ And the sons of Korah were Assir, Elka-nah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. ²⁵ Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

²⁶ These are the same Aaron and Moses to whom the Lord said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies." ²⁷ These are the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These are the same Moses and Aaron.

²⁸ And it came to pass, on the day the Lord spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt. ²⁹ that the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "I am the Lord. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you." ³⁰ But Moses said before the Lord, "Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

⁷ So the Lord said to Moses: "See, I have made you as God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. ² You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. ³ And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. ⁴ But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

⁶ Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the Lord commanded them, so they did. ⁷ And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 6:1-7:7? Why?

Using different highlighters or colored pencils (or markings), highlight the following words:

- "I am the Lord" in red or with a box.
- "Strong hand" and "outstretched arm" in yellow or with an underline.
- All phrases beginning with "My" (e.g., "My name") in light blue or with a circle.
- "Behold" and "see" in green or with a ★.

What is the key part of the Abrahamic Covenant specified by God in this passage? (6:4)

What seven promises did God make to the children of Israel in Exodus 6:6-8?



I will _____ from under the burdens of the Egyptians (6:6a).

I will _____ from their bondage (6:6b).

I will _____ with an outstretched arm (6:6c).

I will _____ as My people (6:7a).

I will _____ and you shall know that I am the Lord (6:7b).

I will _____ which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (6:8a).

I will _____ as a heritage (6:8b).

Why did the people of Israel not listen to Moses when he spoke these promises to them? (6:9)

What excuse does Moses repeat to God in this passage? (6:12, 30) What do you think he means?

Who are the three sons of Levi? (6:16) _____

From which of these sons does Moses descend? _____

What is one of God's ultimate purposes in bringing the plagues upon Egypt? (7:5)

Complete the following sentences:

Then Moses and Aaron did so, just as _____, so they did (7:6).

Moses was _____ years old and Aaron _____ years old when they spoke to Pharaoh (7:7).

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 6:6-8 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

Therefore, tell the Israelites,

I am the Lord.

I will bring you out from your enslavement to the Egyptians,

I will rescue you from the hard labor they impose, and

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

I will take you to myself for a people, and

I will be your God.

*Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out
from your enslavement to the Egyptians.*

I will bring you to the land I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—and

I will give it to you as a possession.

I am the Lord. (NET)

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

God promises to deliver Israel from Egypt based on the covenant that He made with Abraham.

Read the following passages which detail the promises in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

I will make you into a great nation,

and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

and whoever curses you I will curse;

and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

...

The Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. (Genesis 12:1-3, 7)

The Lord said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." (Genesis 13:14-17)

On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates—the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites." (Gen. 15:18-21)

Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God." (Gen. 17:3-8)

What are the main promises that God makes to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant?

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "Exodus 6" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on Exodus 6:6 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the word "redeem" and click on the Strong's number (H1350) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is the Hebrew word for "redeem"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially the Outline of Biblical Usage and Gesenius' Lexicon.)

Read the following passages which use this Hebrew word. Mark key phrases as you read.

*If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and **redeem** what they have sold. (Leviticus 25:25)*

*If a stranger or sojourner with you becomes rich, and your brother beside him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner with you or to a member of the stranger's clan, then after he is sold he may be **redeemed**. One of his brothers may **redeem** him. (Leviticus 25:47-48)*

*Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day." ... So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a **redeemer**, and may his name be renowned in Israel!" (Ruth 4:8-10, 13-14)*

*For I know that my **Redeemer** lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,
That in my flesh I shall see God,
Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27)*

What do you learn about redemption from these verses? What is required to be a redeemer?

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures.

EXODUS 6:1-9

I. God silences Moses' complaints with the assurance of success in this negotiation, repeating the promise made him in 3:20, *After that, he will let you go*. When Moses was at his wit's end, wishing he had stayed in Midian, rather than have come to Egypt to make bad worse—when he was quite at a loss what to do—*Then the Lord said unto Moses*, for the quieting of his mind, *'Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh'*; now that the affair has come to a crisis, things are as bad as they can be, Pharaoh is in the height of pride and Israel in the depth of misery, now is my time to appear. *'Now will I arise'*. Note: Man's extremity is God's opportunity of helping and saving. Moses had been expecting what God would do; but now he shall see what he will do... Moses had been trying what he could do, and could affect nothing. "Well," says God, "now thou shalt see what I will do; let me alone to deal with this proud man." Note: The deliverance of God's church will be accomplished, when God takes the work into his own hands...

II. He gives him further instructions, that both he and the people of Israel might be encouraged to hope for a glorious issue of this affair. Take comfort...

1. From God's name, Jehovah. He begins with this, *I am Jehovah*, the same with, *I am that I am*, the fountain of being, and blessedness, and infinite perfection. The patriarchs knew this name, but they did not know him in this matter by that which this name signifies. God would now be known by his name *Jehovah*, that is, a God performing what he had promised, and so inspiring confidence in

his promises. A God perfecting what he had begun, and finishing his own work. In the history of the creation, God is never called *Jehovah* till the heavens and the earth were finished, Gen. 2:4. When the salvation of the saints is completed in eternal life, then he will be known by his name *Jehovah* (Rev. 22:13); in the mean time they shall find him, for their strength and support, *El-Shaddai, a God all-sufficient*, a God that is enough and will ever be so.

2. From his covenant: *I have established my covenant*. Note: The covenants God makes he establishes; they are made as firm as the power and truth of God can make them. We may venture our all upon this foundation.

3. From his compassions: *I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel*; he means their groaning on occasion of the late hardships put upon them. Note: God takes notice of the increase of his people's calamities, and observes how their enemies grow upon them.

4. From his present resolutions. Here is line upon line, to assure them that they should be brought triumphantly out of Egypt, and should be put in possession of the land of Canaan: *I will bring you out. I will rid you. I will redeem you. I will bring you into the land of Canaan, and I will give it to you*. Let man take the shame of his unbelief, which needs such repetitions; and let God have the glory of his condescending grace, which gives us such repeated assurances for our satisfaction.

5. From his gracious intentions in all these, which were great, and worthy of him, he intended their happiness: *I will take you to me for a people, a peculiar people, and I will be*

to you a God; more than this we need not ask, we cannot have, to make us happy.

And he intended his own glory: *You shall know that I am the Lord*. God will attain his own ends, nor shall we come short of them if we make them our chief end too. Now, one would think, these good words, and comfortable words, should have revived the drooping Israelites, and cause them to forget their misery; but, on the contrary, their miseries made them deaf to God's promises: *They harkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit*. That is... they were so cast down with their late disappointment that they did not believe him... Note: Strong passions oppose strong consolations. By indulging ourselves in discontent and fretfulness, we deprive ourselves of the comfort we might have both from God's word and from his providence...

EXODUS 6:10-13

I. God sends Moses the second time to Pharaoh upon the same errand as before, to command him, at his peril, that he *let the children of Israel go*. Note: God repeats his precepts before he begins his punishments. Those that have often been called in vain to leave their sins must yet be called again and again, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear... *How often would I have gathered you?*

II. Moses makes objections, as one discouraged, and willing to give up the cause. He pleads the unlikelihood of Pharaoh's hearing: "*Behold the children of Israel have not hearkened unto me; they give no heed, no credit, to what I have said; how then can I expect that Pharaoh should hear me? If the anguish of their spirit makes them deaf to that which would compose and comfort them, much more will the anger of his spirit, his pride and insolence, make him deaf to that which will but exasperate and provoke him.*"

If God's professing people hear not his messengers, how can it be thought that his professed enemy should? Note: The stubbornness of those that are called Christians greatly discourage ministers, and make them ready to despair of success in dealing with those that are atheistic and profane...

Moses also pleads the unreadiness and infirmity of his own speaking: *I am of uncircumcised lips*; it is repeated, v. 30. He was conscious to himself that he had not the gift of utterance, had no command of language; his talent did not lie that way. To this objection God had given a sufficient answer before, and therefore he ought not to have insisted upon it, for the sufficiency of grace can supply the defects of nature at any time. Note: Though our infirmities ought to humble us, yet they ought not to discourage us from doing our best in any service we have to do for God. His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

III. God again joins Aaron in commission with Moses, and puts an end to the dispute by interposing his own authority, and giving them both a solemn charge, upon their allegiance to their great Lord, to execute it with all possible expedition and fidelity. When Moses repeats his baffled arguments, he shall be argued with no longer, but God gives him a charge, and Aaron with him, both to the children of Israel and to Pharaoh. Note: God's authority is sufficient to answer all objections, and binds us to obedience, without murmuring or disputing, Phil. 2:14...

EXODUS 6: 14-30

I. We have here a genealogy, not an endless one...for it ends in those two great patriots Moses and Aaron, and comes in here to show that they were Israelites, bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh whom they were sent to deliver, raised up unto them of their brethren, as Christ also should be, who was to be

the prophet and priest, the Redeemer and law-giver, of the people of Israel, and whose genealogy also, like this, was to be carefully preserved. The heads of the houses of three of the tribes are here named, agreeing with the accounts we had, Gen. 46. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, are thus dignified here by themselves for this reason, because they were left under marks of infamy by their dying father, Reuben for his incest and Simeon and Levi for their murder of the Shechemites; and therefore Moses would put this particular honor upon them, to magnify God's mercy in their repentance and remission, as a pattern to those that should afterwards believe: the two former seem rather to be mentioned only for the sake of a third, which was Levi, from whom Moses and Aaron descended, and all the priests of the Jewish faith... Note: Communion with God and service to his church are things that, above any other, put true honor upon men. Those are great indeed with whom God converses and whom he employs on his service. Such were that Moses and Aaron; and something of this honor have all his saints, who are made to our God kings and priests.

II. We have the charge God had given him to deliver his message to Pharaoh *Speak all that I say unto thee*, as a faithful ambassador. Note: Those that go on God's errand must not shun to declare *the whole counsel of God*...

EXODUS 7:1-7

I. God encourages Moses to go to Pharaoh, and at last silences all his discouragements. He clothes him with great power and authority. *I have made thee a god to Pharaoh*; that is, my representative. He was authorized to speak and act in God's name and stead, and, under the divine direction, was endued with a divine power to do that which is above the ordinary power of nature...

II. Moses and Aaron apply themselves to their work without further objection: *They did as the Lord commanded them*. Their obedience, all things considered, was well worthy to be celebrated, as it is by the Psalmist, *They rebelled not against his word* (Ps. 105:28) ...

Notice is taken of the age of Moses and Aaron when they undertook this glorious service. Aaron the elder (and yet the inferior in office) was eighty-three, Moses was eighty; both of them men of great gravity and experience, whose age was venerable, and whose years might teach wisdom. Joseph, who was to be only a servant to Pharaoh, was preferred at thirty years old; but Moses, who was to be a god to Pharaoh, was not so dignified until he was eighty years old. It was fit that he should long wait for such an honor, and be long in preparing for such a service.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 6:1-7:7 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

In the midst of Moses' failure and discouragement, God reminds him of three things.

1. God reminds him of Who He is. *I am the Lord. I am El Shaddai, the All-Sufficient One.*

Consider the following names of God. Circle one which particularly encourages your heart today.

Elohim – God, Creator, Mighty One (Genesis 1:1)
Yahweh (YHWH) – I AM WHO I AM (Genesis 2:4, Exodus 3:14)
El Elyon – God Most High (Genesis 14:18–20)
Adonai – Lord, Master (Genesis 15:2)
El Roi – The God Who Sees Me (Genesis 16:13)
El Shaddai – All-Sufficient One (Genesis 17:1)
El Olam – The Everlasting God (Genesis 21:33)
Yahweh-Yireh – The LORD Will Provide (Genesis 22:14)
Yahweh-Rapha – The LORD Who Heals (Exodus 15:26)
Rock – Unshakeable Refuge (Deuteronomy 32:4)
Yahweh-Shalom – The LORD is Peace (Judges 6:24)
Go'el – Redeemer, Kinsman-Redeemer (Job 19:25)
Yahweh-Rohi – The LORD My Shepherd (Psalm 23:1)
Immanuel – God With Us (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23)

2. God reminds him of His promises. *I have remembered My covenant.*

Read the following promises of God. Circle one which particularly encourages your heart today.

*The LORD Himself goes before you and will be with you;
He will never leave you nor forsake you.
Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. (Deuteronomy 31:8)*

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)*

*The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him;
Though he may stumble, he will not fall,
For the LORD upholds him with His hand. (Psalm 37:23-24)*

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways submit to Him,
And He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

*You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are stayed on You,
because they trust in you. (Isaiah 26:3)*

*But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
They will run and not grow weary,
They will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:31)*

*So do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)*

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,
"Plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
Plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)*

3. God reminds him of the bigger picture. *The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.*

Moses could only see his immediate circumstances. He tried to do what God wanted and, from all appearances, it backfired. Pharaoh was more stubborn. The Israelites were suffering more. And he was rejected, hated, and despised by all those around him. BUT God was doing something bigger than just making Moses feel good at the time. God was preparing Pharaoh to resist Moses' requests so that God could display His power and glory to all of Egypt. And God was allowing the Israelites to experience greater pain so that they could appreciate the greater joy of deliverance.

Moses could not see the end of the story. But we can. No one would have ever watched Charlton Heston in the *Ten Commandments* if Moses had given up and walked back to Midian 😊. More importantly, Israel would have not experienced God's redemption (at least in this way) if Moses would not have set aside his doubts and discouragement and learned to trust God and obey.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 and remind yourself again of the bigger picture.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Using the names of God on the previous page, spend time praising and praying to God. Rejoice in the hope that you have in Jesus Christ and look forward to the glory that awaits you in Him!

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Moses spent forty years in Pharaoh's court thinking he was somebody; forty years in the desert learning he was nobody; and forty years showing what God can do with somebody who found out he was nobody.

Dwight L. Moody

The supreme need in every hour of difficulty and depression is a vision of God. To see Him is to see all else in proper proportion and perspective.

G. Campbell Morgan

This is the difference between Genesis and Exodus. Abraham knew God as a promise-maker; Moses came to know him as a promise-keeper.

Philip Ryken

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- What is a promise of God that has come to mean the most to you at this stage in your life? Why?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 6:1-7:7? Why?
- What are the seven promises that God makes to the children of Israel in Exodus 6:6-8? Which promise do you think encouraged them the most?
- The Israelites could not hear Moses' words because of their extreme anguish and exhaustion (6:9). What are some practical lessons that we learn from this verse?
- Why do you think the genealogy of Moses and Aaron is included at this point in the story?
- What was one of God's main purposes in the exodus (7:5)? What does this teach you?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Discuss some of the names of God and promises of God on page 83. Spend time in prayer using the names of God and promises of God as the basis of your prayer.

CONFRONTING THE GODS OF EGYPT

Exodus 7:8-8:19

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

Reassured and reinvigorated, Moses and Aaron again confront Pharaoh. This time they are fully obedient to the Lord. Thus begins the “ten plagues” which will reveal God’s power and directly confront the gods of Egypt.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 7:8-8:19. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹“When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Prove yourselves by working a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.’” ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. ¹² For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs. ¹³ Still Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water, and stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him. Take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ And you shall say to him, ‘The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, “Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.” But so far, you have not obeyed. ¹⁷ Thus says the Lord, “By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. ¹⁸ The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile.”’” ¹⁹ And the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, their canals, and their ponds, and all their pools of water, so that they may become blood, and there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, even in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.’”

²⁰ Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and all the water in the Nile turned into blood. ²¹ And the fish in the Nile died, and the Nile stank, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. There was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. ²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So Pharaoh’s heart remained hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. ²³ Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take even this to heart. ²⁴ And all the Egyptians dug along the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink the water of the Nile.

²⁵ Seven full days passed after the Lord had struck the Nile.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ² But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will plague all your country with frogs. ³ The Nile shall swarm with frogs that shall come up into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed and into the houses of your servants and your people, and into your ovens and your kneading bowls. ⁴ The frogs shall come up on you and on your people and on all your servants.’”” ⁵ And the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the canals and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt!’” ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. ⁷ But the magicians did the same by their secret arts and made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

⁸ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, “Plead with the Lord to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go to sacrifice to the Lord.” ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, “Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and for your servants and for your people, that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.” ¹⁰ And he said, “Tomorrow.” Moses said, “Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God. ¹¹ The frogs shall go away from you and your houses and your servants and your people. They shall be left only in the Nile.”

¹² So Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the Lord about the frogs, as he had agreed with Pharaoh. ¹³ And the Lord did according to the word of Moses. The frogs died out in the houses, the courtyards, and the fields. ¹⁴ And they gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, he hardened his heart and would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

¹⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” ¹⁷ And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. (ESV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 7:8-8:19? Why?

Using different colored pencils (or markings), **highlight** the following phrases:

- “As the Lord commanded” in yellow or with a circle or arrow →.
- “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened” (or similar phrases) in red or with a box or ♥.
- “You shall know...” (or similar phrases) in green or underline or ★.

What is the first miracle that Moses and Aaron perform before Pharaoh? (7:9-10)

Can the Egyptian magicians duplicate this miracle? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ At least in appearance

What occurs to distinguish Moses and Aaron’s miracle from the magicians’ secret arts? (7:12)

As the ten plagues begin, a pattern emerges. The plagues seem to occur in sets of three.

Fill in the following chart with some of the distinctive features of each plague.

	Is Warning Given?	What Happens?	Magicians’ Response	Pharaoh’s Response
7:14-25				
8:1-15				
8:16-19				

What are the purpose statements given for the plagues in this passage? (*that you shall know...*)

7:17 _____

8:10 _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 8:8-10 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said,

*“Pray to the Lord that he may take the frogs away from me and my people,
and I will release the people that they may sacrifice to the Lord.”*

Moses said to Pharaoh,

*“You may have the honor over me—
when shall I pray for you, your servants, and your people,
for the frogs to be removed from you and your houses,
so that they will be left only in the Nile?”*

He said, “Tomorrow.”

And Moses said,

*“It will be as you say,
so that you may know that there is no one like the Lord our God.” (NET)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE
INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

One of the key themes in the Exodus story is the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. There are two primary Hebrew verbs used to describe this hardening process in Pharaoh's heart.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "Exodus 7" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on Exodus 7:13 to bring up the verse in the Hebrew. Find the verb "hardened" and click on the Strong's number (H2388) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is this Hebrew word for "hardened"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How many times is it used in Exodus? _____ (See Search Results by Book.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong's Definitions and (1)(2)(3) in Gesenius' Lexicon.)

Next, using blueletterbible.org, find the verb "hardened" in 8:15 and click on the Strong's number (H3513) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is this Hebrew word for "hardened"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How many times is it used in Exodus? _____ (See Search Results by Book.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong's Definitions and (5) in Gesenius' Lexicon.)

What do these two Hebrew words reveal about the condition of Pharaoh's heart?

God's purpose in the Exodus is not only to deliver Israel but also to make Himself known, to reveal His power and His sovereignty over all the earth (cf. 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14-16, 29; 10:2). God also indicates that the plagues will be a judgment against *all the gods of Egypt* (12:12).

Read the following excerpts which describe the various gods in Egypt.

The deities in ancient Egyptian tradition are difficult to count. Egyptian texts list the names of many deities whose nature is unknown, and make vague, indirect references to other gods who are not even named. Egyptologist James Allen estimates that more than 1400 deities are named in Egyptian texts, though there may have been "thousands upon thousands" (Wikipedia, *List of Egyptian Deities*).

The Lord judged not only Egypt's deities as a whole, he also challenged the power and authority of individual gods. For example, a case can be made that the power of well-known, major Egyptian deities Amun and Ra (which became fused into Amun-Ra), Isis and Osiris were targeted in all the plagues.

Ra (Amun-Ra) was the foremost Egyptian sun god as well as the deity of kings and the sky. All forms of life were believed to be created by him. The goddess **Isis** was believed to possess magical powers that exceeded all other deities. She was also considered the goddess of the Nile River who could cast healing spells to benefit ordinary people. **Osiris** was a deity of fertility, agriculture, life, vegetation and the annual flooding of the Nile. Other individual gods were also specifically challenged by the plagues.

The first plague to befall Egypt was the Nile River and all the streams it fed turning to blood (7:14-25). The Egyptian gods judged in this miracle were **Khnum**, who controlled the Nile flood, as well as the lesser-known Nile deity **Neter-hau**. **Sobek** was also targeted as he was, along with other powers, responsible for protecting others from the dangers of the river. There was also **Hapi**, a hermaphroditic deity (male/female), who was responsible for fertility and the Nile's annual flood.



The second judgment upon Egypt was a huge swarm of frogs (8:1-15). The Egyptian goddess **Heket**, a symbol of fertility, is portrayed with a frog's head. She was associated explicitly with the last stages of the flooding of the Nile. Her authority was specifically challenged in this plague.

The third plague turns the dust of the earth into lice, or possibly mosquitoes, affecting both people and animals (8:16-19). These insects are hard to kill and cause irritation and disease. This plague challenges **Geb**, the god of the earth, and the fertility of the soil. For the Egyptians, the dust of the earth was a symbol of life and fertility, as it supported plants and animals. By transforming the dust into a source of discomfort and disease, God shows that even the fundamental element of the earth, supposedly under the protection of Geb, can become an instrument of suffering.

(See articles on Egyptian gods available on biblestudy.org, bcworldview.org, and gotquestions.org)

What do you learn about the plagues and the Egyptian gods from these excerpts?

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures.

EXODUS 7:8-13

The first time that Moses made his application to Pharaoh, he produced his instructions only; now he is directed to produce his credentials, and does accordingly.

1. Pharaoh challenges these demandants to work a miracle, that, by a performance evidently above the power of nature, they might prove their commission from the God of nature. Pharaoh will say, *Show a miracle*; not with any desire to be convinced, but with the hope that none will be wrought...

2. Orders are therefore given to turn the rod into a serpent, according to the instructions. The same rod that was to give the signal of the other miracles is now itself the subject of a miracle, to put a reputation upon it. Aaron cast his rod to the ground, and instantly it became a serpent. This was proper, not only to affect Pharaoh with wonder, but to strike a terror upon him. Serpents are hurtful dreadful animals; the very sight of one, thus miraculously produced, might have softened his heart into a fear of that God by whose power it was produced. This first miracle, though it was not a plague, yet amounted to the threatening of a plague. If it made not Pharaoh feel, it made him fear; and this is God's method of dealing with sinners—he comes upon them gradually.

3. This miracle, though too plain to be denied, is enervated by the magicians' imitation of it. Moses had been originally instructed in the learning of the Egyptians, and was suspected to have improved himself in magical arts in his long retirement; the magicians are therefore sent for, to vie with him... Their rods became serpents, real serpents; some think, by the power of God, beyond their intention or expectation, for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart;

others think, by the power of demons, artfully substituting serpents in the room of the rods, God permitting the delusion to be wrought for wise and holy ends, that those might believe a lie who received not the truth: and herein the Lord was righteous... Note: God suffers the lying spirit to do strange things, that the faith of some may be tried and manifested and that the infidelity of others may be confirmed...

Yet, in this contest, Moses plainly gains the victory. The serpent which Aaron's rod was turned into swallowed up the others, which was sufficient to have convinced Pharaoh on which side the right lay. Note: Great is the truth, and will prevail. The cause of God will undoubtedly triumph at last over all competition and contradiction, and will reign alone, Dan. 2:44. But Pharaoh was not wrought upon by this. The magicians having produced serpents, he had this to say, that the case between them and Moses was disputable; and the very appearance of an opposition to truth, and the least head made against it, serve those for a justification of their infidelity who are prejudiced against the light and love of it.

EXODUS 7:14-25

Here is the first of the ten plagues, the turning of the water into blood, which was,

1. A dreadful plague, and very grievous. The very sight of such vast rolling streams of blood, pure blood no doubt, florid and high-colored, could not but strike a horror upon people: much more afflictive were the consequences of it... The Egyptians must either drink blood, or die for thirst. Fish was much of their food (Num. 11:5), but the changing of the waters was the death of the fish; it was a pestilence in that element: *The fish died*... Egypt was a pleasant land, but the noisome stench of dead fish and

blood, which by degrees would grow putrid, now rendered it very unpleasant.

2. **It was a righteous plague**, and justly inflicted upon the Egyptians. For, Nilus, the river of Egypt, was their idol; they and their land derived so much benefit from it that they served and worshipped it more than the Creator. The true fountain of the Nile being unknown to them, they paid all their devotions to its streams: here therefore God punished them, and turned that into blood which they had turned into a god. Note: That creature which we idolize God justly removes from us, or embitters to us. He makes that a scourge to us which we make a competitor with him. They had also stained the river with the blood of the Hebrews' children, and now God made that river all bloody...

3. **It was a significant plague.** Egypt had a great dependence upon their river, so that in smiting the river they were warned of the destruction of all the productions of their country, till it came at last to their firstborn; and this red river proved a direful omen of the ruin of Pharaoh and all his forces in the Red Sea... *Lastly*, let me observe concerning this plague that one of the first miracles Moses wrought was turning water into blood, but one of the first miracles our Lord Jesus wrought was turning water into wine; for the law was given by Moses, and it was a dispensation of death and terror; but grace and truth, which, like wine, make glad the heart, came by Jesus Christ.

I. Moses is directed to give Pharaoh warning of this plague... He is directed to meet him by the river's brink, whither God foresaw he would come in the morning, either for the pleasure of a morning's walk or to pay his morning devotions to the river: for thus all people will walk, everyone in the name of his god; they will not fail to worship their god every morning. There Moses must be ready to give him a new summons to surrender, and, in case of a refusal, to tell him of the judgment that was coming upon that very river on the banks of which they were now standing. Notice

is thus given him of it beforehand, that they might have no color to say it was a chance, or to attribute it to any other cause, but that it might appear to be done by the power of the God of the Hebrews, and as a punishment upon him for his obstinacy... Note: God warns before he wounds; for he is *long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance...*

II. Aaron is directed to summon the plague by smiting the river with his rod. It was done in the sight of Pharaoh and his attendants; for God's true miracles were not performed, as Satan's lying wonders were, by those that peeped and muttered: truth seeks no corners. An amazing change was immediately wrought; all the waters, not only in the rivers but in all their ponds, were turned into blood. See here the almighty power of God...

III. Pharaoh endeavors to confront the miracle, because he resolves not to humble himself under the plague. He sends for the magicians, and, by God's permission, they ape the miracle with their enchantments, and this serves Pharaoh for an excuse not to set his heart to this also, and a pitiful excuse it was. Could they have turned the river of blood into water again, this would have been something to the purpose; then they would have proved their power, and Pharaoh would have been obliged to them as his benefactors. But for them, when there was such scarcity of water, to turn more of it into blood, only to show their art, plainly intimates that the design of the devil is only to delude his devotees and amuse them, not to do them any real kindness, but to keep them from doing a real kindness to themselves by repenting and returning to their God.

IV. The Egyptians, in the meantime, are seeking for relief against the plague, digging round about the river for water to drink. Probably they found some, with much ado, God remembering mercy in the midst of wrath; for he is full of compassion, and would not let the subjects smart too much for the obstinacy of their prince.

EXODUS 8:1-15

Pharaoh is first threatened and then plagued with frogs, as afterwards, in this chapter, with lice and flies, little despicable inconsiderable animals, and yet by their vast numbers rendered sore plagues to the Egyptians. God could have plagued them with lions, bears, wolves, or with vultures or other birds of prey; but he chose to do it by these contemptible instruments.

1. That he might magnify his own power. He is Lord of the hosts of the whole creation, has them all at his beck, and makes what use he pleases of them. Some have thought that the power of God is shown as much in the making of an ant as in the making of an elephant; so is his providence in serving his own purposes by the least creatures as effectually as by the strongest, that the excellency of the power, in judgment as well as mercy, may be of God, and not of the creature. See what reason we have to stand in awe of this God, who, when he pleases, can arm the smallest parts of the creation against us. If God be our enemy, all the creatures are at war with us.

2. That he might humble Pharaoh's pride. What a mortification must it needs be to this haughty monarch to see himself brought to his knees, and forced to submit, by such despicable means! Every child is, ordinarily, able to deal with those invaders, and can triumph over them; yet now so numerous were their troops, and so vigorous their assaults, that Pharaoh, with all his chariots and horsemen, could make no head against them... As to the plague of frogs we may observe:

I. How it was threatened. Moses, no doubt, attended the divine Majesty daily for fresh instructions, and (perhaps while the river was yet blood) he is here directed to give notice to Pharaoh of another judgment coming upon him in case he continue obstinate: *If thou refuse to let them go...* Note: God does not punish men for sin unless they persist in it... If Pharaoh complied the controversy should immediately be dropped. The plague threatened, in case of

refusal, was formidably extensive. Frogs were to make such an inroad upon them as should make them uneasy in their houses, in their beds, and at their tables; they should not be able to eat, nor drink, nor sleep in quietness, but, wherever they were, should be infested by them. Note: God's curse upon a man will pursue him wherever he goes, and lie heavily upon him whatever he does. See Deut. 28:16.

II. How it was inflicted. Pharaoh not regarding the alarm, nor being at all inclined to yield to the summons, Aaron is ordered to draw out the forces, and with his outstretched arm and rod to give the signal of battle... Under the direction and command of an invisible power, shoals of frogs invade the land, and the Egyptians, with all their art and all their might, cannot check their progress, nor so much as give them a diversion. Frogs came up, at the divine call, and *covered the land*. Note: God has many ways of disquieting those that live at ease.

III. How the magicians were permitted to imitate it. They also brought up frogs, but could not remove those that God sent...

IV. How Pharaoh relented under this plague. It was the first time he did so. He begs of Moses to intercede for the removal of the frogs, and promises fair that he will let the people go. He that a little while ago had spoken with the utmost disdain both of God and Moses is now glad to be beholden to the mercy of God and the prayers of Moses. Note: Those that bid defiance to God and prayer in a day of extremity will, first or last, be made to see their need of both, and will cry, *Lord, Lord*, Mt. 7:22...

V. How Moses fixes the time with Pharaoh, and then prevails with God by prayer for the removal of the frogs. Moses, to show that his performances had no dependence upon the conjunctions or oppositions of the planets, or the luckiness of any one hour more than another, bids Pharaoh name his time. *Have this honor over me, tell me against when I shall entreat for thee*. This was designed for Pharaoh's conviction that, if his eyes were not opened by the

plague, they might by the removal of it. So various are the methods God takes to bring men to repentance. Pharaoh sets the time for *tomorrow*. Why not immediately? Was he so fond of his guests that he would have them stay another night with him? No, but probably he hoped that they would go away of themselves, and then he should get clear of the plague without being obliged either to God or Moses. However, Moses joins issue with him: *Be it according to thy word*, it shall be done just when thou would have it done, *that thou may know that there is none like unto the Lord our God*. None has such a command as he has over all the creatures, nor is any one so ready to forgive those that humble themselves before him. Note: The great design both of judgments and mercies is to convince us that there is none like the Lord our God, none so wise, so mighty, so good, no enemy so formidable, no friend so desirable. Moses prays to remove the frogs. Note: We must pray for our enemies and persecutors, even the worst as Christ did. In answer to Moses' prayer the frogs that came up one day perished the next...

VI. **The issue of this plague.** *When Pharaoh saw there was a respite*, without considering either what he had lately felt or what he had reason to fear, he hardened his heart. Note: Till the heart is renewed by the grace of God, the impressions made by the force of affliction do not abide; the convictions wear off, and the promises that were extorted are forgotten...

EXODUS 8:16-19

Here is a short account of the plague of lice. It does not appear that any warning was given of it before. Pharaoh's abuse of the respite granted to him might have been a sufficient warning to him to expect another plague...

I. **How this plague of lice was inflicted.** The frogs were produced out of the waters, but these live out of *the dust of the earth*; for out of any part of the creation God can fetch a scourge, with which to correct those that rebel against him. He has many arrows in his quiver. Even the dust of the earth obeys him...

II. **How the magicians were baffled by it.** They attempted to imitate it, but they could not... This forced them to confess themselves overpowered: *This is the finger of God!* Note: Sooner or later God will extort, even from his enemies, an acknowledgment of his own sovereignty and overruling power...

III. **How Pharaoh was made more and more obstinate;** even those that had deceived him now said enough to undeceive him, and yet he grew more and more obstinate. Even the miracles and the judgments were to him a savor of death unto death. Note: Those that are not made better by God's word and providences are commonly made worse by them.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 7:8-8:19 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

The Egyptians had thousands of gods. Each of these gods represented something that was important to them, something that they relied upon, something that gave them a sense of security.

Most of us do not consider ourselves idolators. We do not bow down before figures of wood or stone and consider them our gods. But an idol is whatever takes the place of God. It is whatever dominates my time, attention, and affections. It is whatever I think that I cannot live without.

Consider the gods that you may have in your own heart. Take time to fill in the boxes below.

What thoughts tend to dominate my mind?	What do I worry about? What do I fear losing?
What am I most proud of? What do I talk about?	What am I angry about? What do I really want?
What has my attention? What do I tend to do first thing in the morning or in my down time?	What do I think that I cannot live without?

Based on your answers, what might be some of your idols that the Lord needs to confront?

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

The entire story of the plagues is about a contest between the will of the pharaoh and the will of God. Pharaoh was a self-proclaimed god, the object of worship by his subjects.

Nahum M. Sarna

The human heart is a perpetual idol factory.

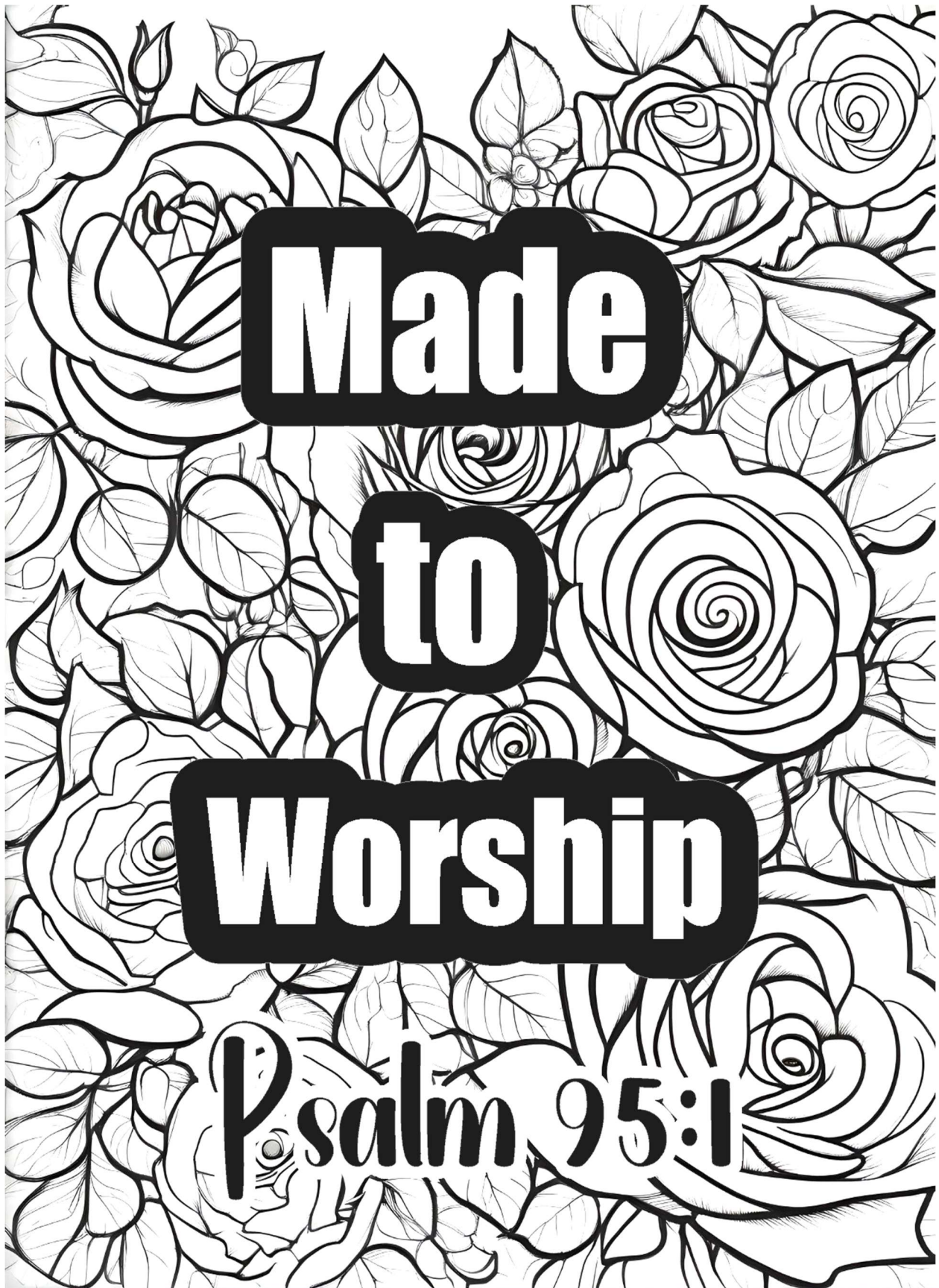
John Calvin

The true god of your heart is what your thoughts effortlessly go to when there is nothing else demanding your attention.

Timothy Keller

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- In what ways do you tend to be stubborn? In what ways would your spouse, children, or close acquaintances say that you are stubborn?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 7:8-8:19? Why?
- How do you think the Egyptian magicians were able to duplicate some of these miracles?
- What was the significance of the first plague? Why the Nile River?
- How would the first three plagues have affected life in Egypt? If you could imagine a newspaper headline or news report, what would it say?
- What observations can you make about Pharaoh from this passage? What was he like?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Egypt had thousands of gods that they relied upon and gave their devotion to. What idols or gods do you think we have in America? Which of these gods vie for your devotion?
- Pray together as a group. Confess any idols that distract or divide your heart from God.



Made

to

Worship

Psalm 95:1

CONFRONTING THE GODS OF EGYPT – Part II

Exodus 8:20-9:35

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

The ten plagues upon Egypt continue in this passage. With each plague, the stakes are raised, the damage is increased, and Pharaoh's heart grows harder. But in the midst of the plagues, God continues to protect Israel.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 8:20-9:35. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."²¹ Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand."²² But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth."²³ Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.'""²⁴ And the Lord did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

²⁵ Then Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land."²⁶ But Moses said, "It would not be right to do so, for the offerings we shall sacrifice to the Lord our God are an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice offerings abominable to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not stone us?"²⁷ We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he tells us."²⁸ So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you must not go very far away. Plead for me."²⁹ Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you and I will plead with the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow. Only let not Pharaoh cheat again by not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord."³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord.³¹ And the Lord did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; not one remained.³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and did not let the people go.

9 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "Let my people go, that they may serve me."² For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, ³ behold, the hand of the Lord will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks.⁴ But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that belongs to the people of Israel shall die.'""⁵ And the Lord set a time, saying, "Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land."⁶ And the next day the Lord did this thing. All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one of the livestock of the people of Israel died.⁷ And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

⁸ And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw them in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹ It shall become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and become boils breaking out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.” ¹⁰ So they took soot from the kiln and stood before Pharaoh. And Moses threw it in the air, and it became boils breaking out in sores on man and beast. ¹¹ And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils came upon the magicians and upon all the Egyptians. ¹² But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

¹³ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. ¹⁴ For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself, and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth. ¹⁵ For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth. ¹⁷ You are still exalting yourself against my people and will not let them go. ¹⁸ Behold, about this time tomorrow I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ Now therefore send, get your livestock and all that you have in the field into safe shelter, for every man and beast that is in the field and is not brought home will die when the hail falls on them.”’” ²⁰ Then whoever feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh hurried his slaves and his livestock into the houses, ²¹ but whoever did not pay attention to the word of the Lord left his slaves and his livestock in the field.

²² Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, so that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, on man and beast and every plant of the field, in the land of Egypt.” ²³ Then Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. ²⁴ There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck down everything that was in the field in all the land of Egypt, both man and beast. And the hail struck down every plant of the field and broke every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, was there no hail.

²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent and called Moses and Aaron and said to them, “This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. ²⁸ Plead with the Lord, for there has been enough of God’s thunder and hail. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.” ²⁹ Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s. ³⁰ But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God.” ³¹ (The flax and the barley were struck down, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the emmer were not struck down, for they are late in coming up.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and stretched out his hands to the Lord, and the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured upon the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses. (ESV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 8:20-9:35? Why?

Using different colored pencils (or markings), **highlight** the following phrases:

- “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened” (or similar phrases) in red or with a box or ♥.
- “You shall know...” (or similar phrases) in green or underline or ★.

Fill in the following chart with some of the distinctive features of each plague in this passage.

	Is Warning Given?	What Happens?	What Does Pharaoh Do?	Pharaoh’s Heart
8:20-32				
9:1-7				
9:8-12				
9:13-35				

What are the purpose statements given for the plagues in this passage? (*that you shall know...*)

8:22

9:14

9:29

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 9:14-16 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*For this time I am going to send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people,
so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth.*

*For had I now put out My hand and struck you and your people with plague,
you would then have been eliminated from the earth.
But indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain,
in order to show you My power
and in order to proclaim My name throughout the earth. (NASB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

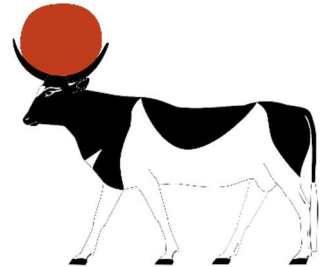
One of the purposes of the plagues is to execute judgment against *all the gods of Egypt* (12:12).

Read the following excerpt which describes the gods of Egypt impacted by the plagues.



The fourth plague is swarms of flies that invade Egypt, making life impossible across the country. Flies, instead of being harmless, become a source of disorder and nuisance that invades every corner of Egypt. This plague confronts **Khepri**, the god of creation and rebirth, who was associated with insects, especially the scarab. Khepri symbolized orderly creation and renewal. However, by filling the land with annoying and invasive insects, God shows that this “creation” becomes a force of disorder when out of control. The plague of flies symbolizes that the true power over life and order belongs to the God of Israel, not to Khepri...

The fifth plague sends a deadly disease that affects all of Egypt’s livestock, devastating the agricultural economy and leaving the population without vital resources. Here, God challenges **Hathor**, the goddess of motherhood and fertility, depicted as a cow, and **Apis**, the bull god, a symbol of fertility and strength. For the Egyptians, livestock represented wealth, health, and economic stability. The destruction of the livestock reveals that even symbols of abundance and fertility can be taken away and that Hathor and Apis are incapable of protecting animal life under their domain...



The sixth plague sends boils that affect both humans and remaining animals across the region. This plague directly challenges **Sekhmet**, the goddess of healing and protection, known for driving away diseases and keeping her people safe. This plague emphasizes that health and disease are in the hands of God, and the Egyptian gods are incapable of offering true protection or healing...

The seventh plague is a hailstorm, accompanied by fire, which destroys crops, trees, and kills both people and animals. This plague challenges **Nut**, the goddess of the sky, responsible for controlling the weather and protecting the heavens. The storm destroys crops and trees, causing agricultural devastation that strikes at the heart of Egypt’s economy. Nut’s inability to stop the storm shows that the power over the heavens and the earth belongs to the God of Israel, not to Egypt’s deities.



(Excerpt from Grandi, *When God Humiliated the Gods of Egypt*, bcworldview.org)

What do you learn about the plagues and the Egyptian gods from this excerpt?

One of the other primary purposes of the plagues is that *you may know that I am the Lord* (7:17). Pharaoh's first question is *who is the Lord that I should obey Him?* (5:2). The ten plagues are God's answer to Pharaoh's question. The plagues serve as a revelation of God's power and glory.

Read the following passages that tell us what we should know. Mark key phrases as you read.

*"I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, **that you may know** that there is none like Me in all the earth."* (9:14)

*"As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, **that you may know** that the earth is the Lord's."* (9:29)

*"But against all the Israelites, whether people or animals, not even a dog will snarl, so **that you may know** that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel."* (11:7)

*"You are My witnesses," says the Lord, "And My servant whom I have chosen, **that you may know** and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me."* (Isaiah 43:10)

*I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so **that you may know** that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name.* (Isaiah 45:3)

*"But **that you may know** that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then Jesus said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."* (Matthew 9:6)

*[Jesus said,] "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so **that you may know** and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father."* (John 10:37-38)

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so **that you may know** what is the hope of His calling, what is the wealth of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe... (Ephesians 1:18-19a).*

*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, **that you may know** that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.* (1 Jn. 5:13)

List the truths that we should know based on these passages.

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures.

EXODUS 8:20-32

Here is the story of the plague of flies:

I. How it was threatened, like that of frogs, before it was inflicted. Moses is directed to rise early in the morning, to meet Pharaoh when he came forth to the water, and there to repeat his demands. Note: Those that would bring great things to pass for God and their generation must rise early, and redeem time in the morning. Pharaoh was early up at his superstitious devotions to the river; and shall we be for more sleep and more slumber when any service is to be done which would pass well in our account in the great day? ...

II. How the Egyptians and Hebrews were to be remarkably distinguished in this plague. It is probable that this distinction had not been so manifest and observable in any of the foregoing plagues as it was to be in this. Thus, as the plague of lice was made more convincing than any before it, by its running the magicians aground, so was this, by the distinction made between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. Pharaoh must be made to know that *God is the Lord in the midst of the earth*; and by this it will be known beyond dispute... The servants and worshippers of the great Jehovah shall be preserved from sharing in the common calamities of the place they live in, so that the plague which annoys all their neighbors shall not approach them; and this shall be an incontestable proof that God is *the Lord in the midst of the earth*... Note: The Lord knows those that are his, and will make it appear, perhaps in this world, certainly in the other, that he has set them apart for himself. A day will come when you shall *return and discern between the righteous and the wicked* (Mal. 3:18), *the sheep and the goats* (Mt. 25:32; Eze. 34:17), though now intermixed.

III. How it was inflicted: *There came a grievous swarm of flies*, flies of diverse sorts, and such as devoured them. The prince of the power of the air has gloried in being *Beelzebub—the god of flies*; but here it is proved that even in *that* he is a pretender and a usurper, for even with swarms of flies God fights against his kingdom and prevails.

IV. How Pharaoh, upon this attack, sounded a parley, and entered into a treaty with Moses and Aaron about a surrender of his captives...

1. He is content they should sacrifice to their God, provided they would do it in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh, under the smart of the rod, is content they should do sacrifice, and will allow liberty of conscience to God's Israel, even in his own land. But Moses will not accept his concession. It would be an abomination to God should they offer the Egyptian sacrifices, and an abomination to the Egyptians should they offer to God their own sacrifices, as they ought; so that they could not sacrifice in the land without incurring the displeasure either of their God or of their taskmasters; therefore he insists: *We will go three days' journey into the wilderness*. Note: Those that would offer an acceptable sacrifice to God must separate themselves from the wicked and profane; for we cannot have fellowship both with the Father of lights and with the works of darkness, both with Christ and with Belial, 2 Cor. 6:14. They must also retire from the distractions of the world, and get as far as may be from the noise of it. Israel cannot keep the feast of the Lord either among the brick-kilns or among the flesh-pots of Egypt...

2. When this proposal is rejected, he consents for them to go into the wilderness, provided they do not go *very far away*, not so far but that he might fetch them back again. It is probable he had heard of their design upon Canaan, and

suspected that if once they left Egypt they would never come back again; and therefore, when he is forced to consent that they shall go (the swarms of flies buzzing the necessity in his ears), yet he is not willing that they should go out of his reach. Thus some sinners who, in a pang of conviction, part with their sins, yet they do not put them very far away; for, when the fright is over, they will return to them again... If we think to put a cheat upon God by a counterfeit repentance, and a fraudulent surrender of ourselves to him, we shall prove, in the end, to have put a fatal cheat upon our own souls...

God graciously removed the plague, but Pharaoh perfidiously returned to his hardness, and *would not let the people go*. His pride would not let him part with such a flower of his crown as his dominion over Israel was, nor his covetousness with such a branch of his revenue as their labors were. Note: Reigning lusts break through the strongest bounds, and make men scandalously deceived and deceitful. Let not sin therefore reign; for, if it does, it will betray and hurry us to the grossest absurdities.

EXODUS 9:1-7

I. Warning given of another plague, namely, the murrain of beasts. When Pharaoh's heart was hardened, after he had seemed to relent under the former plague, then Moses is sent to tell him there is another coming... Thus is the wrath of God revealed from heaven, both in his word and in his works, *against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*.

1. Moses puts Pharaoh in a very fair way to prevent it: *Let my people go*. This was still the demand. God will have Israel released; Pharaoh opposes it, and the trial is, *whose word shall stand*. See how jealous God is for his people. See how reasonable God's demands are. Whatever he calls for, it is but *his own*: They are my people, therefore let them go.

2. He describes the plague that should come, if he refused. *The hand of the Lord* immediately, without the stretching out of Aaron's

hand, *is upon the cattle*, many of which, some of all kinds, should die by a sort of pestilence. This was greatly to the loss of the owners: they had made Israel poor, and now God would make them poor...

3. As an evidence of the special hand of God in it, and of his particular favor to his own people, he foretells that none of their cattle should die, though they breathed in the same air and drank of the same water with the Egyptians' cattle. Note: When God's judgments are abroad, though they may fall both on the righteous and the wicked, yet God makes such a distinction that they are not the same to the one that they are to the other. The providence of God is to be acknowledged with thankfulness in the life of the cattle, for he preserves man and beast.

4. To make the warning the more remarkable, the time is fixed: *Tomorrow* it shall be done. We know not what any day will bring forth, and therefore we cannot say what we will do tomorrow, but it is not so with God.

II. The plague itself inflicted. The cattle died, v. 6. Note: The creature is made subject to vanity by the sin of man, being liable, according to its capacity, both to serve his wickedness and to share in his punishment, as in the universal deluge... See Jer. 12:4, *For the wickedness of the land, the beasts are consumed*. The Egyptians worshiped their cattle; it was among them that the Israelites learned to make a god of a calf: in this therefore the plague here spoken of meets with them. Note: What we make an idol of it is just with God to remove from us...

III. The distinction put between the cattle of the Egyptians and the Israelites' cattle, according to the word of God: *Not one of the cattle of the Israelites died*. Does God take care of oxen? Yes, he does; his providence extends itself to the meanest of his creatures. But it is written also for our sakes, that, trusting in God, and making him our refuge, we may not be *afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, no, not though *thousands fall at our side*, Ps. 91:6-7. Pharaoh sent to see if the cattle of

the Israelites were infected, not to satisfy his conscience, but only to gratify his curiosity, or with design, by way of reprisal, to repair his own losses out of their stocks; and, having no good design in the enquiry, the report brought to him made no impression upon him, but, on the contrary, his heart was hardened. Note: To those that are willfully blind, even those methods of conviction which are ordained to life prove a savor of death unto death.

EXODUS 9:8-12

Observe here, concerning the plague of boils...

I. When they were not wrought upon by the death of their cattle, **God sent a plague that seized their own bodies...** If less judgments do not do their work, God will send greater. Let us therefore humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and go forth to meet him in the way of his judgments, that his anger may be turned away from us.

II. **The signal by which this plague was summoned** was the sprinkling of warm ashes from the *furnace*... Immediately upon the scattering of the ashes, a scalding dew came down out of the air, which blistered wherever it fell. Note: Sometimes God shows men their sin in their punishment; they had oppressed Israel in the furnaces, and now the ashes of the furnace are made as much a terror to them as ever their task-masters had been to the Israelites.

III. **The plague itself was very grievous**—a common eruption would be so, especially to the nice and delicate, but these eruptions were inflammations, like Job's. This is afterwards called the *botch of Egypt* (Deut. 28:27), as if it were some new disease never heard of before, and known ever after by that name...

IV. **The magicians themselves were struck with these boils...** God will severely reckon with those that strengthen the hands of the wicked in their wickedness... Thus they were shamed in the presence of their admirers. How weak were their enchantments, which could not

so much as secure themselves! The devil can give no protection to those that are in confederacy with him...

V. **Pharaoh continued obstinate**, for now *the Lord hardened* his heart. Before, he had hardened his own heart and resisted the grace of God; now God justly gave him up to his own heart's lusts, to a reprobate mind, and strong delusions, permitting Satan to blind and harden him, and ordering everything, henceforward, so as to make him more and more obstinate. Note: Willful hardness is commonly punished with judicial hardness. If men shut their eyes against the light, it is just with God to close their eyes. Let us dread this as the sorest judgment a man can be under on this side hell.

EXODUS 9:13-21

I. **A general declaration of the wrath of God against Pharaoh for his obstinacy.** Though God has hardened his heart, yet Moses must repeat his applications to him... Six times the demand had been made in vain, yet Moses must make it the seventh time: *Let my people go*. A most dreadful message Moses is here ordered to deliver to him, whether he will hear or not.

1. **He must tell him that he is marked for ruin**, that he now stands as the butt at which God would shoot all the arrows of his wrath. *Now I will send all my plagues*. Now that no place is found for repentance in Pharaoh, nothing can prevent his utter destruction, for that only would have prevented it. Now that God begins to *harden his heart*, his case is desperate. Note: God can send plagues upon the heart, either by making it senseless or by making it hopeless—and these are the worst plagues...

2. **He must tell him that he is to remain in history a standing monument of the justice and power of God's wrath:** *For this cause have I raised thee up* to the throne at this time, and made thee to stand the shock of the plagues hitherto, *to show in thee my power*. Providence ordered it so that Moses should have a man of such a fierce and stubborn spirit as he was to

deal with; and everything was so managed in this transaction as to make it a most signal and memorable instance of the power God has to humble and bring down the proudest of his enemies. Everything concurred to signalize this, that God's name (i.e., his incontestable sovereignty, his irresistible power, and his indomitable justice) might be declared throughout all the earth, not only to all places, but through all ages while the earth remains. Note: God sometimes raises up very bad men to honor and power, spares them long, and suffers them to grow insufferably insolent, that he may be so much the more glorified in their destruction at last. See how the neighboring nations, at that time, improved the ruin of Pharaoh to the glory of God... Pharaoh was a great king; God's people were poor shepherds at best, and now poor slaves; and yet Pharaoh shall be ruined if he exalts himself against them, for it is considered as exalting himself against God. This was not the first time that God reproved kings for their sakes, and let them know that he would not suffer his people to be trampled upon and insulted, no, not by the most powerful of them.

II. A particular prediction of the plague of hail, and a gracious advice to Pharaoh and his people to send for their servants and cattle out of the field, that they might be sheltered from the hail. Note: When God's justice threatens ruin, his mercy, at the same time, shows us a way of escape from it, so unwilling is he that any should perish. See here what care God took, not only to distinguish between Egyptians and Israelites, but between some Egyptians and others. If Pharaoh will not yield, and so prevent the judgment itself, yet an opportunity is given to those that have any dread of God and his word to save themselves from sharing in the judgment. Note: Those that will take warning may take shelter; and those that will not may thank themselves if they fall by the overflowing scourge... See the different effect of this warning. *Some believed the things that were spoken,* and they feared, and housed their servants and cattle... Even among the servants of Pharaoh there were some that trembled at God's word...

EXODUS 9:22-35

The threatened plague of hail is here summoned by the powerful hand and rod of Moses, and it obeys the summons, or rather the divine command; for *fire and hail fulfil God's word*, Psalm 148:8. And here we are told:

I. What desolations it made upon the earth.

The thunder, and fire from heaven (or lightning), made it both the more dreadful and the more destroying. Note: God makes the clouds, not only his storehouses whence he drops fatness on his people, but his magazines whence, when he pleases, he can draw out a most formidable train of artillery, with which to destroy his enemies. He himself speaks of the *treasures of hail which he hath reserved against the day of battle and war*, Job 38:22-23.

Woeful havoc this hail made in Egypt. It killed both men and cattle, and battered down, not only the herbs, but the trees... Perhaps David alludes to this when, describing God's glorious appearances for the discomfort of his enemies, he speaks of the hail stones and coals of fire he threw among them, Ps. 18:12-13. And there is a plain reference to it on the pouring out of the seventh vial, Rev. 16:21. Notice is here taken of the land of Goshen's being preserved from receiving any damage by this plague. God has the directing of the pregnant clouds, and causes it to rain or hail on one city and not on another, either in mercy or in judgment.

II. What a consternation it put Pharaoh in.

See what effect it had upon him:

1. **He humbled himself** to Moses in the language of a penitent. No man could have spoken better. He owns himself on the wrong side in his contest with the God of the Hebrews: *I have sinned* in standing it out so long. He owns the equity of God's proceedings against him: *The Lord is righteous*, and must be justified when he speaks, though he speak in thunder and lightning. He condemns himself and his land: *I and my people are wicked*, and deserve what is brought upon us.

He begs the prayers of Moses: *Entreat the Lord* for me that this direful plague may be removed. And, *lastly*, he promises to yield up his prisoners: *I will let you go*. What could one desire more? And yet his heart was hardened all this while. Note: The terror of the rod often extorts penitent acknowledgments from those who have no penitent affections; under the surprise and smart of affliction, they start up, and say that which is pertinent enough, not because they are deeply affected, but because they know that they should be and that *it is meet to be said*.

2. Moses, hereupon, becomes an intercessor for him with God. Though he had all the reason in the world to think that he would immediately repent of his repentance, and told him so, yet he promises to be this friend in the court of heaven. Note: Even those whom we have little hopes of, yet we should continue to pray for, and to admonish, 1 Sa. 12:23.

Observe, (1.) The place Moses chose for his intercession. He went *out of the city*, not only for privacy in his communion with God, but to show that he durst venture abroad into the field, notwithstanding the hail and lightning which kept Pharaoh and his servants within doors, knowing that every hail stone had its direction from his God, who meant him no hurt. Note: Peace with God makes men thunder-proof, for thunder is the voice of their Father.

(2.) The gesture: He *spread abroad his hands unto the Lord*—an outward expression of earnest desire and humble expectation. Those that come to God for mercy must stand ready to receive it.

(3.) The end Moses aimed at in interceding for him: *That thou mayest know*, and be convinced, *that the earth is the Lord's*, that is, that God has a sovereign dominion over all the creatures, that they all are ruled by him, and therefore that thou ought to be so. See what various methods God uses to bring men to their proper senses. Judgments are sent, judgments removed, and all for the same end, to make men know that the Lord reigns.

(4.) The success of it. He prevailed with God. But he could not prevail with Pharaoh: *He sinned yet more, and hardened his heart*. The prayer of Moses opened and shut heaven, like Elijah's (Jam. 5:17-18), and such is the power of God's two witnesses (Rev. 11:6); yet neither Moses nor Elijah, nor those two witnesses, could subdue the hard hearts of men. Pharaoh was frightened into a compliance by the judgment, but, when it was over, his convictions vanished, and his fair promises were forgotten. Note: Little credit is to be given to confessions upon the rack. Note also: Those that are not bettered by judgments and mercies are commonly made worse.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 8:20-9:35 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

Over and over, God says the purpose of the plagues is *that you shall know...that you shall know...* This indicates that our greatest bondage is rooted in lies and that our greatest need is to know the truth. Sin first entered the world because Adam and Eve believed a lie (Genesis 3:1-7).

Read and meditate on Jesus' words in John 8:31-36. Mark key words and phrases as you read.

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. Now the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

Deep down, we often believe lies that we are not even aware of. That is why Scripture says over and over: *Do not be deceived...Do not be deceived...*

What lies may be in your own heart? Complete the sentences below with your own inner beliefs. (For example: *To be truly successful in life, I must have the approval and applause of other people.*)

To be _____, I must _____.

If God were good, then He wouldn't have allowed _____.

Nobody really loves me because _____.

To prove my worth, I must _____.

If I don't _____, then everything will fall apart.

If only _____, I would be happy.

What truth(s) from God's Word do you need to remind yourself of today?

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Self-deception is an insidious condition. You will never meet a person who knows he is self-deceived. By definition, those ensnared are completely unaware that they are.

Tom Ascol

The human heart has so many crannies where vanity hides, so many holes where falsehood lurks, is so decked out with deceiving hypocrisy, that it often dupes itself.

John Calvin

Beware of no man more than of yourself; we carry our worst enemies within us.

Charles H. Spurgeon

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- What is one of the first times that you can remember someone lying to you or deceiving you? How did this impact you?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 8:20-9:35? Why?
- The plagues seem to get worse and worse. What made the death of cattle worse than the flies? What made boils worse than death of cattle? What made the hail worse than boils?
- Why did God raise Pharaoh up? What do you think about this?
- What lies did the people of Egypt believe that needed to be confronted by God?
- Pharaoh seems to repent in 9:27-28. What strikes you about his words? What do his words and actions teach you about false repentance?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Read one of your statements on page 110. Why do you tend to believe this lie?
- Share one truth from God's Word that encourages you today.

FACING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

Exodus 10:1-11:10

DAY ONE OBSERVATION

The final three plagues are poured out on Egypt. Pharaoh's stubborn pride has reached a point of no return. Even his flowery words of "repentance" are empty. God's glory will be displayed and His people will be redeemed.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 10:1-11:10. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Now the Lord said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, ² and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the Lord."

³ So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ⁴ Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. ⁵ And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. ⁶ They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

⁷ Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?" ⁸ So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the Lord your God. Who are the ones that are going?" ⁹ And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord." ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "The Lord had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. ¹¹ Not so! Go now, you who are men, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desired." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

¹² Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left." ¹³ So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. ¹⁴ And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. ¹⁵ For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

¹⁶ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, “I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. ¹⁷ Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God, that He may take away from me this death only.” ¹⁸ So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the Lord. ¹⁹ And the Lord turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. ²⁰ But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

²¹ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt.” ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. ²³ They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. ²⁴ Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, “Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you.” ²⁵ But Moses said, “You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. ²⁶ Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the Lord our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the Lord until we arrive there.” ²⁷ But the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let them go. ²⁸ Then Pharaoh said to him, “Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!” ²⁹ So Moses said, “You have spoken well. I will never see your face again!”

11 And the Lord said to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. ² Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold.” ³ And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.

⁴ Then Moses said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; ⁵ and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. ⁶ Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. ⁷ But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the Lord does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.’ ⁸ And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will go out.” Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

⁹ But the Lord said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not heed you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the Lord hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land. (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 10:1-11:10? Why?

Using different colored pencils (or markings), **highlight** the following phrases:

- “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened” (or similar phrases) in red or with a box or ♥.
- “You shall know...” (or similar phrases) in green or underline or ★.

What are the three reasons given for God hardening Pharaoh’s heart? (10:1-2)

1. *That I may* _____.
2. *That you may tell* _____.
3. *That you may know* _____.

Fill in the following chart with some of the distinctive features of the eighth and ninth plague.

	Is Warning Given?	What Happens?	Pharaoh’s Response	Pharaoh’s Heart
10:1-20				
10:21-29				

What two stipulations does Pharaoh make in the following verses? (*OK, you can go but...*)

10:8-11 _____
10:24 _____

How did the Egyptians view Moses and Israel at this time? (11:3) _____

What is the final plague? (11:4-6) _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 10:1-2 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*Then Yahweh said to Moses,
“Come to Pharaoh,
for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants with firmness,
that I may set these signs of Mine among them,
and that you may recount in the hearing of your son and of your grandson,
how I dealt severely with the Egyptians,
and how I put My signs among them,
that you may know that I am Yahweh.” (LSB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

As the plagues become harsher, Pharaoh's heart becomes harder. He is encouraged to humble himself before the Lord (10:3) but he simply will not. His pride is at the center of all his trouble.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "Exodus 10" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on Exodus 10:3 to bring up the verse in Hebrew. Find the verb "humble" and click on the Strong's number (H6031) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is this Hebrew word for "humble"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note the Niphal in the Outline of Biblical Usage and Gesenius' Lexicon.)

Read the following passages which use this Hebrew word. Mark key phrases as you read.

*Then the angel of the Lord said to her [Hagar], "Return to your mistress [Sarah], and **submit yourself** to her authority." (Genesis 16:9)*

*So they appointed taskmasters over them to **afflict** them with hard labors. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Ramses. (Exodus 1:11)*

*On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall **humble your souls** and bring an offering by fire near to Yahweh. (Leviticus 23:27)*

*Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to **humble** and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. He **humbled** you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. (Deuteronomy 8:2-3)*

*I **humbled myself** with fasting, and my prayer was genuine. (Psalm 35:13b)*

*It is good for me that I was **afflicted**, so that I may learn Your statutes. (Psalm 119:71)*

*He was oppressed and He was **afflicted**,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)*

What do you learn about this Hebrew word from these verses?

Despite all the warnings, despite all the evidences of God's power, despite his own advisors trying to reason with him, Pharaoh would not humble himself and his heart became harder and harder. Pharaoh's heart was already bent on selfish pride and God strengthened him in his stubbornness.

Read the following verses. Beside each verse note who is responsible for Pharaoh's hardening.

*The Lord said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will **harden** his heart so that he will not let the people go." (4:23)*

*Pharaoh's heart became **hard** and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had said. (7:13)*

*But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became **hard**; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. (7:22)*

*But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he **hardened** his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said. (8:15)*

*The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was **hard** and he would not listen, just as the Lord had said. (8:19)*

*But this time also Pharaoh **hardened** his heart and would not let the people go. (8:32)*

*But the Lord **hardened** Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said to Moses. (9:12)*

*When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials **hardened** their hearts. (9:34)*

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have **hardened** his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these signs of mine among them." (10:1)*

*But the Lord **hardened** Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go. (10:20)*

*Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord **hardened** Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country. (11:10)*

Though we cannot fully understand the interplay between God's sovereign action and our personal responsibility, Pharaoh is an example of someone whose pride and selfish choices shaped his character to such a degree that he reached a point of no return. This is a warning to all men.

Read the following excerpts which describe the gods of Egypt impacted by these final plagues.

The seventh plague of locusts showed up the Egyptian god **Bastet**, a deity in the form of a cat who was supposed to be the protector of crops from rodents and vermin like locusts. Neither was **Osiris** god of agriculture, much help. Osiris was considered the ruler of death and life, and of sprouting vegetation, and legend had it that Osiris developed agriculture in Egypt. However, Osiris was a dead deity, being ruler of the dead, and this plague just went to show quite how dead and useless he was, along with Bastet...



By bringing the plague of darkness, God demonstrated His sovereignty over Egypt's most powerful gods. The sun god, **Ra**, had the head of a falcon and the body of a human. This deity was often considered to be the first king, ruling initially over humans and gods on earth and then later in the heavens, according to the British Museum. Ancient Egyptians thought Ra had power to control the sky and the weather, as well as life and death. There were also other sun gods such as **Aton**, depicted simply as a circular yellow sun with rays emitting from the disk that had human hands. **Horus** was another, portrayed as a falcon with his right eye as the sun or morning star, representing power and quintessence. So much for their power. They all had to sit in silence and defeat, their hubris snuffed out with the sun they supposedly controlled...

Last but not least was the direct repayment for Pharaoh's genocidal massacre of Hebrew baby boys. This tenth plague was a direct strike against the Pharaoh himself and his line. Egyptian pharaohs were considered deities, and descendants of the gods, but none could withstand God's destroying angel... All who had foolishly put their faith in Pharaoh saw that their leader had no supernatural powers at all...



This final blow was also an attack on the deities **Isis** and **Osiris**, protectors of life. The loss of their firstborns shows that neither Pharaoh, Isis, nor Osiris can protect their families from the hand of God. The tenth plague reveals that the power of life and death belongs solely to the God of Israel.

(Excerpts from When God Humiliated the Gods of Egypt, bcworldview.org, and from The Meaning of the Ten Plagues and the Egyptian Gods They Defeated, oneforIsrael.org)

What do you learn about the plagues and the Egyptian gods from these excerpts?

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures.

EXODUS 10:1-11

I. Moses is instructed. We may well suppose that he, for his part, was much astonished both at Pharaoh's obstinacy and at God's severity, and could not but be compassionately concerned for the desolations of Egypt and at a loss to conceive what this contest would come to at last. Now here God tells him what he designed, not only Israel's release, but the magnifying of his own name: *That thou mayest tell in thy writings, which shall continue to the world's end, what I have wrought in Egypt.* The ten plagues of Egypt must be inflicted, that they may be recorded for the generations to come as undeniable proofs of God's overruling power in the kingdom of nature, his dominion over all the creatures, and his authority to use them either as servants to his justice or sufferers by it, according to the counsel of his will...

II. Pharaoh is reproved: *Thus saith the Lord God of the poor, despised Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?* Note: It is justly expected from the greatest of men that they humble themselves before the great God, and it is at their peril if they refuse to do it. Those that will not humble themselves God will humble. Pharaoh had sometimes pretended to humble himself, but no account was made of it, because he was neither sincere nor constant in it.

III. The plague of locusts is threatened. The hail had broken down the fruits of the earth, but these locusts should come and devour them: and not only so, but they should fill their houses, whereas the former inroads of these insects had been confined to their lands. This should be much worse than all the calamities of that king which had ever been known. Moses, when he had delivered his message, not expecting any better answer than he had formerly,

turned himself and went out from Pharaoh. Thus Christ appointed his disciples to depart from those who would not receive them, and to *shake off the dust of their feet for a testimony against them.* Ruin is not far off from those who are justly abandoned by the Lord's messengers.

IV. Pharaoh's attendants interpose, to persuade him to come to some terms with Moses. They, as in duty bound, represent to him the deplorable condition of the kingdom (*Egypt is destroyed*), and advise him by all means to release his prisoners (*Let the men go*); for Moses, they found, would be a snare to them till it was done, and it were better to consent at first than to be compelled at last. The Israelites had become a burdensome stone to the Egyptians, and now, at length, the princes of Egypt were willing to be rid of them. Note: It is a thing to be regretted (and prevented, if possible) that a whole nation should be ruined for the pride and obstinacy of its leaders...

V. A new treaty is set on foot between Pharaoh and Moses, in which Pharaoh consents for the Israelites to go into the wilderness to do sacrifice; but the matter in dispute was who should go. Moses insists that they should take their whole families, and all their effects, along with them... But Pharaoh will by no means grant this: he will allow the men to go, pretending that this was all they desired, though this matter was never yet mentioned in any of the former treaties; but, for the *little ones*, he resolves to keep them as hostages, to oblige them to return. In a great passion he curses them, and threatens that, if they offer to remove their little ones, they will do it at their peril. Note: Satan does all he can to hinder those that serve God themselves from bringing their children in to serve him. He is a sworn enemy to early piety, knowing how destructive it is to the interests of his kingdom; whatever would

hinder us from engaging our children to the utmost in God's service, we have reason to suspect the hand of Satan in it...

EXODUS 10:12-20

I. The invasion of the land by the locusts—*God's great army*, Joel 2:11. God bids *Moses stretch out his hand*, to beckon them, as it were (for they came at a call) ... The locusts obey the summons, and fly upon the wings of the wind, the east wind. A formidable army of horse and foot might more easily have been resisted than this host of insects. Who then is able to stand before the great God?

II. The desolations they made in it: They *covered the face of the earth*, and *ate up the fruit* of it. The earth God has *given to the children of men*; yet, when God pleases, he can disturb their possession and send locusts to force them out. Herbs grow *for the service of man*; yet, when God pleases, those contemptible insects shall plunder him, and eat the bread out of his mouth. Let our labor be, not for the habitation and meat which thus lie exposed, but for those which *endure to eternal life*, which cannot be thus invaded, nor thus corrupted.

III. Pharaoh's admission. He had driven Moses and Aaron from him, telling them he would have no more to do with them. But now he calls for them again in all haste, and makes court to them with as much respect as before he had dismissed them with disdain. Note: The day will come when those who set at nought their counsellors, and despise all their reproofs, will be glad to make an interest in them and engage them to intercede on their behalf...

1. Pharaoh confesses his fault: *I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you.* He now sees his own folly in the affronts he had put on God and his ambassadors, and *seems* at least, to repent of it. When God convinces men of sin, and humbles them for it, their contempt of God's ministers, and the word of the Lord in their mouths, will certainly come into the account, and lie heavily upon their consciences.

2. He begs pardon, not of God, as penitents ought, but of Moses... When he prays, *Forgive this once*, he, in effect, promises not to offend in like manner any more, yet seems loath to express that promise, nor does he say anything particularly of letting the people go. Note: Counterfeit repentance commonly cheats men with general promises and is loath to covenant against particular sins.

3. He entreats Moses and Aaron to pray for him. There are those who, in distress, implore the help of other persons' prayers, but have no mind to pray for themselves, showing thereby that they have no true love to God, nor any delight in communion with him. Pharaoh desires their prayers *that this death* only might be taken away, not *this sin*: he deprecates the plague of locusts, not the plague of a hard heart, which yet was much the more dangerous.

IV. The removal of the judgment, upon the prayer of Moses. This was as great an instance of the power of God as the judgment itself. An east wind brought the locusts, and now a west wind carried them off. Note: Whatever point of the compass the wind is in, it is fulfilling God's word, and turns about by his counsel... Moses' commission indeed ran against Egypt, but his intercession was for it, which was good reason why the Egyptians should love him, though they feared him. It was also a strong argument for their repentance... For God is ready to forgive, and swift to show mercy. If he turned away a particular judgment, as he did often from Pharaoh, upon the profession of repentance and the outward tokens of humiliation, what will he do if we be sincere! O that this goodness of God might lead us to repentance!

V. Pharaoh's return to his impious resolution again not to let the people go, through the righteous hand of God upon him, hardening his heart, and confirming him in his obstinacy. Note: Those that have often baffled their convictions, and stood it out against them, forfeit the benefit of them, and are justly given up to those lusts of their own hearts which prove too strong for them.

EXODUS 10:21-29

I. The plague of darkness brought upon Egypt, and a most dreadful plague it was... Observe particularly concerning this plague...

1. **That it was a total darkness.** We have reason to think, not only that the lights of heaven were clouded, but that all their fires and candles were put out by the damps or clammy vapors which were the cause of this darkness...

2. **That it was darkness which *might be felt*** in its *causes* by their fingers' ends (so thick were the fogs), felt in its *effects*, some think, by their eyes, which were pricked with pain, and made the more sore by their rubbing them...

3. **No doubt it astonished and terrified them.** The cloud of locusts, which had *darkened the land*, was nothing to this. The tradition of the Jews is that in this darkness they were terrified by the apparitions of evil spirits, or rather by the dreadful sounds and murmurs which they made, or (which is no less frightful) by the horrors of their own consciences...

4. **It continued three days**; so long they were imprisoned by those chains of darkness, and the most lightsome palaces were perfect dungeons. No *man rose from his place*. They were all confined to their houses; and such a terror seized them that few of them had the courage to go from the chair to the bed, or from the bed to the chair. Thus were they *silent in darkness*. Now Pharaoh had time to consider. Spiritual darkness is spiritual bondage; while Satan blinds men's eyes that they see not, he binds them hands and feet that they work not for God, nor move towards heaven. They *sit in darkness*.

5. **It was a righteous thing with God thus to punish them.** Pharaoh and his people had rebelled against the light of God's word, which Moses spoke to them; justly therefore are they punished with darkness, for they loved it and chose it rather. The blindness of their minds brings upon them this darkness of the air. Never was mind so blinded as Pharaoh's, never was

air so darkened as Egypt's. The Egyptians by their cruelty would have extinguished the lamp of Israel, and quenched their coal; justly therefore does God put out their lights...

6. **The children of Israel, at the same time, had *light in their dwellings***... This is an instance of the power of God above the ordinary power of nature. We must not think that we share in common mercies as a matter of course, and therefore that we owe no thanks to God for them; he could distinguish, and withhold that from us which he grants to another. He does indeed ordinarily make his sun to shine on the just and unjust; but he could make a difference, and we must own ourselves indebted to his mercy that he does not... During these three days of darkness to the Egyptians, if God had so pleased, the Israelites, by the light which they had, might have made their escape, and without asking leave of Pharaoh; but God would bring them out *with a high hand*, and not by stealth, nor in haste, Isa. 52:12.

II. The impression made upon Pharaoh by this plague, much like the foregoing plagues.

1. **It awakened him** so far that he renewed the treaty with Moses and Aaron, and now, at length, consented that they should take their little ones with them, only he would have their cattle left in pawn. It is common for sinners thus to bargain with God Almighty. Some sins they will leave, but not all; they will leave their sins for a time, but they will not bid them a final farewell; they will allow him some share in their hearts, but the world and the flesh must share with him: thus they mock God, but they deceive themselves... Moses gives a very good reason why they must take their cattle with them; they must go to do sacrifice... What numbers and kinds of sacrifices would be required they did not yet know, and therefore they must take all they had. Note: With ourselves, and our children, we must devote all our worldly possessions to the service of God, because we know not what use God will make of what we have, nor in what way we may be called upon to honor God with it.

2. **Yet it exasperated him** so far that, when he might not make his own terms, he broke off the conference abruptly, and took up a resolution to treat no more. Wrath now came upon him to the utmost, and he became outrageous beyond all bounds. Moses is dismissed in anger, forbidden the court upon pain of death, forbidden so much as to meet Pharaoh any more... Prodigious madness! Had he not found that Moses could plague him without seeing his face? Or had he forgotten how often he had sent for Moses as his physician to heal him and ease him of his plagues? and must he now be bidden to come near him no more? Impotent malice! To threaten him with death who was armed with such a power, and at whose mercy he had so often laid himself. What will not hardness of heart and contempt of God's word and commandments bring men to? ...After this interview, Moses came no more, till he was sent for. Note: When men drive God's word from them he justly permits their delusions, and answers them according to the multitude of their idols...

EXODUS 11:1-10

I. The high favor Moses and Israel were in with God.

1. **Moses was a favorite of Heaven**, for God will not hide from him the thing he will do. God not only makes him his messenger to deliver his errands, but communicates to him his purpose (as the man of his counsel) that he would bring one plague more, and but one, upon Pharaoh, by which he would complete the deliverance of Israel. Moses longed to see an end of this dreadful work, to see Egypt no more plagued and Israel no more oppressed: "Well," says God, "now it is near an end; the warfare shall shortly be accomplished, the point gained; Pharaoh shall be forced to own himself conquered, and to give up the cause." After all the rest of the plagues, God says, *I will bring one more*. Thus, after all the judgments executed upon sinners in this world, still there is one more reserved to be brought on them in the other world, which will completely humble those whom nothing else would humble.

2. **The Israelites were favorites of Heaven**; for God himself espouses their injured cause, and takes care to see them paid for all their pains in serving the Egyptians. This was the last day of their servitude; they were about to go away, and their masters, who had abused them in their work, would not have defrauded them of their wages, and have sent them away empty; while the poor Israelites were so fond of liberty that they would be satisfied with that, without pay, and would rejoice to get that upon any terms: but he that *executes righteousness and judgment for the oppressed* provided that the laborers should not lose their hire... God, by the plagues, made the Egyptians as willing to part with them upon any terms as, before, the Egyptians, by their severities, had made them willing to go upon any terms. Though the Israelites were content to lose their wages, yet God would not let them go without them. Note: One way or other, God will give redress to the injured, who in humble silence commit their cause to him. He will see to it that none be losers at last by their patient suffering...

II. **The high favor Moses and Israel had with the Egyptians**. Even the people that have been hated and despised now came to be respected; the wonders wrought on their behalf put an honor upon them and made them considerable. How great do they become for whom God thus fights! Thus *the Lord gave them favor* in the sight of the Egyptians, by making it appear how much he favored them: he also changed the spirit of the Egyptians towards them... And *the man Moses was very great*. How could it be otherwise when they saw what power he was clothed with, and what wonders were wrought by his hand? Thus the apostles, though otherwise despicable men, came to be magnified, Acts 5:13. Those that honor God he will honor. Those that are faithful to him... there is a day coming when they will look great, very great, in the eyes of all the world, even theirs who now look upon them with the utmost contempt. Though Pharaoh hated Moses, there were those of Pharaoh's servants that respected him. Thus even in Nero's household, there were some that had an esteem for blessed Paul, Phil. 1:13.

Warning is here given to Pharaoh of the last and conquering plague which was now to be inflicted. This was the *death of all the first-born in Egypt* at once, which had been first threatened (4:23), but is last executed; lesser judgments were tried, which, if they had done the work would have prevented this. See how slow God is to wrath, and how willing to be met with in the way of his judgments, and to have his anger turned away, and particularly how precious the lives of men are in his eyes: if the death of their cattle had humbled and reformed them, their children would have been spared...

1. The plague itself is here particularly foretold. The time is fixed—about midnight, the very next midnight, the dead time of the night; when they were all asleep, all their first-born should sleep the sleep of death... *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*; what is hell but this?

2. The special protection which the children of Israel should be under, and the manifest difference that should be put between them and the Egyptians. While angels drew their swords against the Egyptians, there should not so much as a dog bark at any of the children of Israel... An earnest was hereby given of the difference which shall be put in the great day between God's people and his enemies...

3. The humble submission which Pharaoh's servants should make to Moses, and how submissively they should request him to go. Note: The proud enemies of God and his Israel shall be made to fall under at last (Rev. 3:9) ...

When Moses had thus delivered his message, it is said, *He went out from Pharaoh in a great anger*, though he was the meekest of all the men of the earth. Probably he expected that the very threatening of the death of the firstborn would have induced Pharaoh to comply, especially as Pharaoh had complied so far already, and had seen how exactly all Moses' predictions hitherto were fulfilled. But it had not that effect; his proud heart would not yield, no, not to save all the firstborn of his kingdom: no marvel that men are not deterred from vicious courses by the prospects given them of eternal misery in the other world, when the imminent peril they run of the loss of all that is dear to them in this world will not frighten them. Moses, hereupon, was provoked to a holy indignation, being grieved (as our Savior) for the *hardness of his heart*, Mk. 3:5. Note: It is a great vexation to the spirits of good ministers to see people deaf to all the fair warnings given them, and running headlong upon ruin, notwithstanding all the kind methods taken to prevent it... To be angry at nothing but sin is the way not to sin in anger...

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 10:1-11:10 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart is a warning to us all. To those who refuse to bow the knee to Jesus Christ, it is a warning that it is possible to reach a stage when our consciences are so seared that we become hardened to the grace of God. To those who are saved, it is a warning that we can be so hardened by sin's deceitfulness and find ourselves in bondage to a habit or addiction that hinders our effectiveness in God's work and subjects us to the discipline of the Lord.

*But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today,
so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. (Hebrews 3:13)*

Read and consider the following words from J. Alec Motyer's *The Message of Exodus*.

Humans are so created that the choices they make contribute to forming character, and character thus formed promotes the making of similar choices in the future. Sometimes it takes a very long series of choices to produce a fixed habit, sometimes one choice is enough...

Choosing and habit-forming are things we all know about. What none of us knows is when the "point of no return" will be reached. None of us can say, "One more sound choice and this good habit is permanently mine," nor can we say, "I can risk one more choice and still retain freedom to give up this bad habit." Sadly, we can pass the point where freedom to change has been lost and still retain the illusion that "I can give it up any time I want!"

Thus, the situation in which Pharaoh found himself was not peculiar to him but is intrinsic to the human condition. Only God foresees the decisive, freedom-destroying choice, and only he knows at once when the choice that kills freedom has been made...

With these words we are forcefully reminded that choices are the privilege and price of being human. Our privilege is that of being responsible beings...called to make responsible choices... The price we pay is that every choice, for good or ill, goes to fashioning our characters, and in the long or short term—or both—those choices make us answerable to the Judge of all the earth.

What stands out to you in Motyer's words? Why?

One of the sobering messages of the plagues is that God is a God of judgment. We may quibble about God's fairness in hardening Pharaoh's heart or why He allowed such tragic events to occur or whether He could have done things in a different way. But the bottom line is that God is God. He rules over all the universe. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. He is Creator and Lord. He alone sees down to the very motives and thoughts of the human heart. He is just and fair. He is also holy and righteous. He is gracious to show mercy but He is also right to execute judgment.

It was Pharaoh's pride that ultimately brought him into judgment (10:3).

Though Pharaoh mouthed all the right words, his heart was still unwilling to bow to the Lord.

What about your own heart?

Have you come to the place where you recognize your sin and understand your need for God's grace displayed in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for you? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (Romans 3:23-24)

For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:12-13)

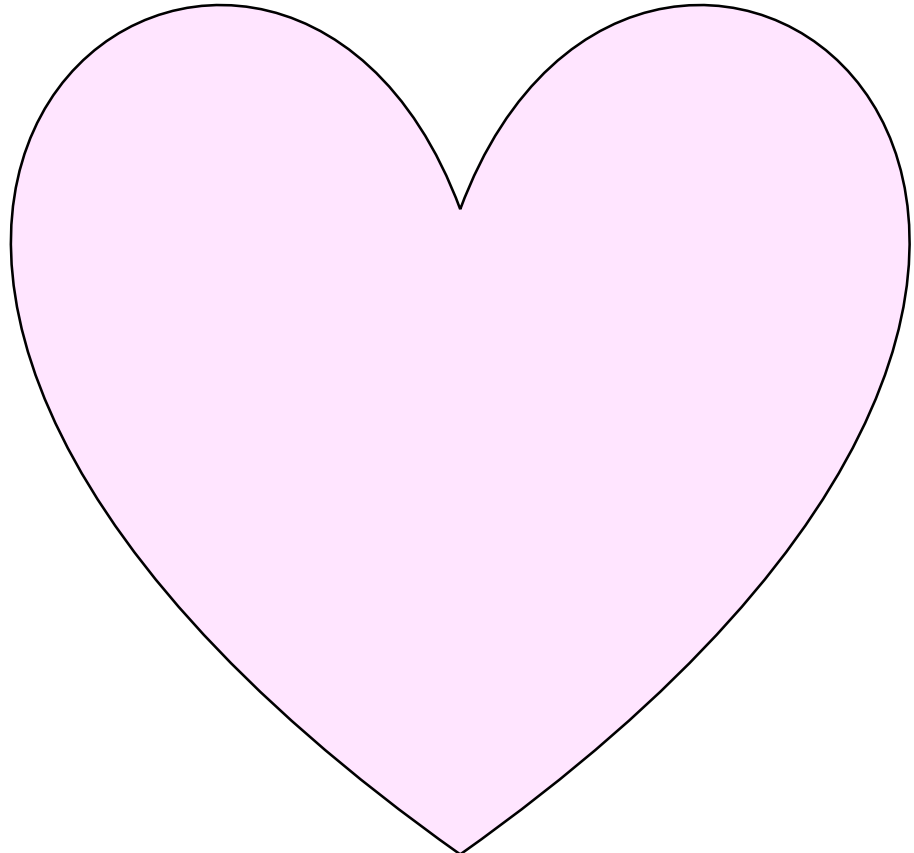
Using this heart illustration, evaluate your own heart. Write or draw pictures of what you could imagine is going on your heart.

Are there places in your heart that have been walled off from God or from others?

What fears are there?
Regrets? Desires? Joys?

What memories are dominant? What loves and motives are deep?

Who (or what) is on the throne of your heart?



ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

*Self is the most treacherous enemy,
and the most insinuating deceiver in
the world. Of all other vices, it is
both the hardest to find out,
and the hardest to cure.*

Richard Baxter

*All caricatures of God which ignore
His intense hatred for sin reveal
more about man than about God.
In a moral universe God must of
necessity oppose evil.*

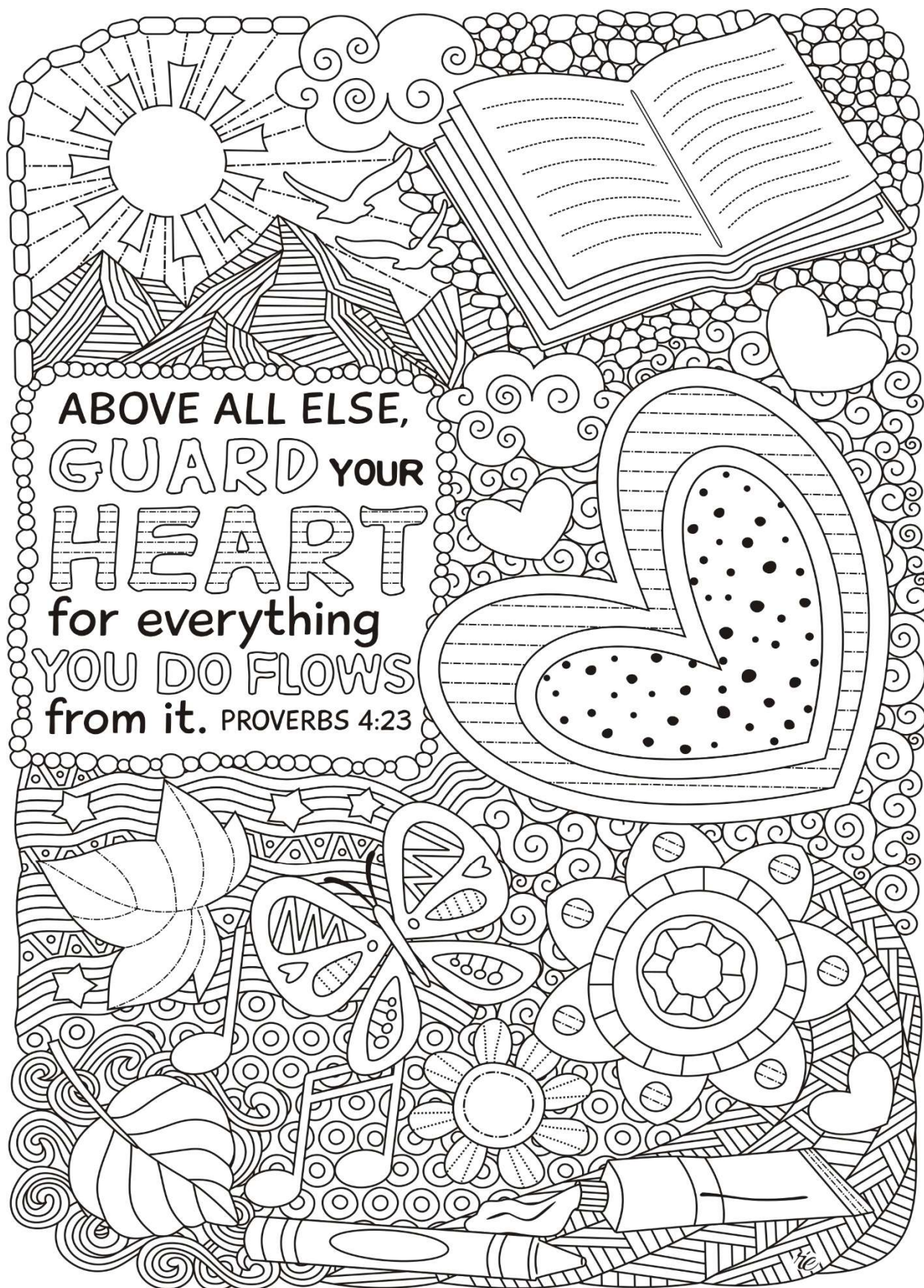
Robert Mounce

*God is not obligated to save
anybody, to make any special act of
grace, to draw anyone to Himself.
He could leave the whole world to
perish, and such would be a
righteous judgment.*

R. C. Sproul

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- What is the worst storm that you have ever been in? How did this storm make you feel?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 10:1-11:10? Why?
- According to 10:1-2, what were the reasons for the plagues?
- At times Pharaoh seems to have a real change of heart and a desire to repent. But it does not last. Why not? What do you think makes Pharaoh's repentance a false repentance?
- What do you understand about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart? Was it all God's doing? Was it all Pharaoh's doing? Was it both?
- Pharaoh is willing to let the people go with some stipulations. He wants them not to go too far (8:28), then he wants them to leave their children (10:10), then he wants them to leave their flocks (10:24). Do you see any parallels with how the world offers compromises to us?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Read Motyer's quote on page 124. What stands out to you in his quote? Why?
- Read Hebrews 3:13 together. Take time to encourage and pray for one another.



Purchased from etsy.com/shop/RicLDPArworks

APPLYING THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

Exodus 12:1-28

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

The tenth plague—the death of the firstborn—has been announced. Now Moses and Aaron must instruct the people of Israel on how they can avert God’s judgment. Deliverance can only come by the blood of the lamb.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 12:1-28. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ²“This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ⁴And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ⁹Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. ¹⁰You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. ¹¹And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord’s Passover.

¹²‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. ¹³Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. ¹⁵Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. ¹⁷So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. ¹⁸In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first

day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.”

²¹ Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. ²² And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. ²³ For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you. ²⁴ And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. ²⁵ It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. ²⁶ And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ ²⁷ that you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. ²⁸ Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 12:1-28? Why?

Using different highlighters or colored pencils (or markings), highlight the following words:

- “Lamb” or “blood” in red or with a box.
- “Unleavened bread” or “leaven” in yellow or with an underline.
- “Pass through” or “pass over” or “Passover” in light blue or with a circle.

Complete the following sentences based on this passage:

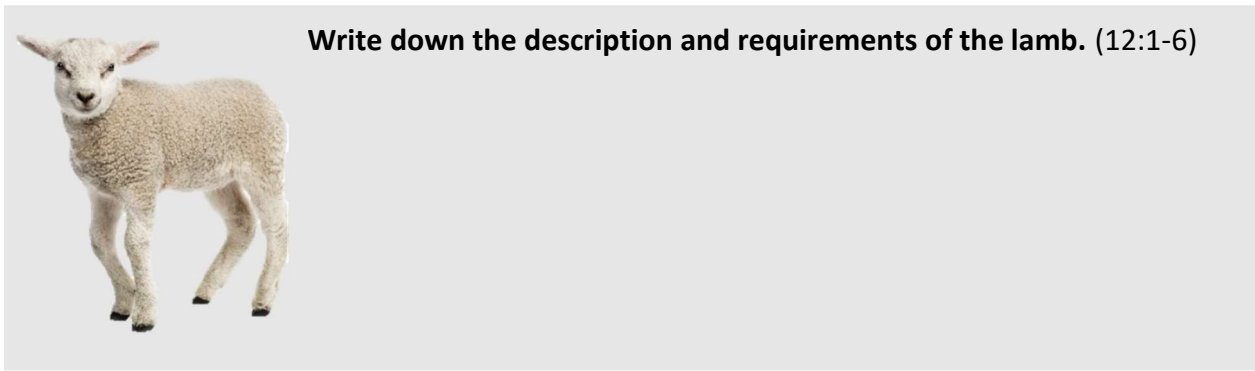
This month [Hebrew, Nisan or March/April] shall be the _____ month of the year for you (12:2).

On the _____ of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb (12:3).

You shall keep the lamb until the _____ day of the month (12:6).

Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at _____ (12:6).

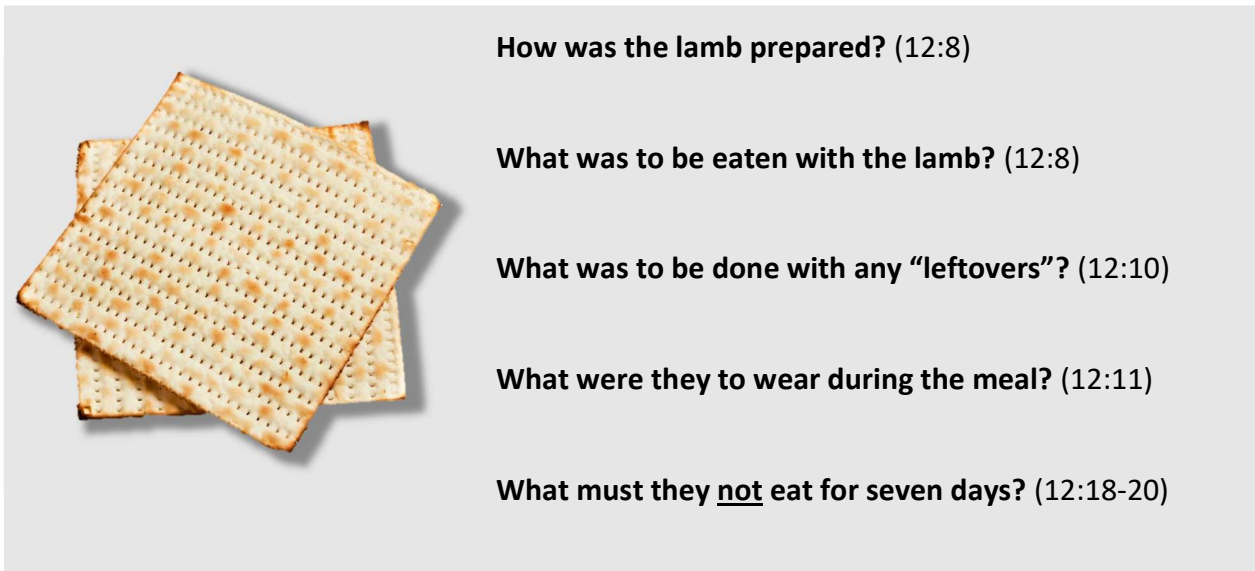
So shall you eat it in haste, it is the Lord’s _____ (12:11)



Where was the blood to be applied? (12:7)
Mark it on the door frame using a red marker or pencil.

How was the blood to be applied? (12:22)

What would God do when He saw the blood? (12:13, 23)



How did the people of Israel respond to Moses and Aaron’s instructions? (12:27-28)

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 12:12-14 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

On that same night

*I will pass through Egypt
and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals,
and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt.*

I am the Lord.

*The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are,
and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.
No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. (NIV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE
INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type "Exodus 12" into the "Search the Bible" box. Click on Exodus 12:11 to bring up the verse in Hebrew. Find the word "passover" and click on the Strong's number (H6453) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is this Hebrew word for "passover"? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note especially Strong's Definitions and Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon.)

What is the root word of this Hebrew word? _____ (See Root Word (Etymology).)

What is the definition of this Hebrew word? (Click on H6452 to bring up its own definition).

*The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are,
and when I see the blood, I will **pass over** you.
No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. (Exodus 12:13)*

Read the following passages regarding the importance of blood. Mark key phrases as you read.

*The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's **blood** cries out to me from the ground."*
(Genesis 4:10)

*Whoever sheds human **blood**, by humans shall their **blood** be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind. (Genesis 9:6)*

*Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his **blood**." (Genesis 42:22)*

*Moses then took the **blood**, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the **blood** of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Exodus 24:8)*

*For the life of a creature is in the **blood**, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the **blood** that makes atonement for one's life. (Leviticus 17:11)*

*For the life of every creature is its blood: its **blood** is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the **blood** of any creature, for the life of every creature is its **blood**. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. (Leviticus 17:14)*

*Do not pollute the land where you are. **Bloodshed** pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which **blood** has been shed, except by the **blood** of the one who shed it. (Num. 35:33)*

*For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the **blood** of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, “This is the **blood** of the covenant that God commanded for you.” And in the same way he sprinkled with the **blood** both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with **blood**, and without the shedding of **blood** there is no forgiveness of sins. (Hebrews 9:19-22)*

Write down three to five observations about the importance of blood from these verses.

What is important to realize is that on Passover night—the night in which God executed His judgment on all of Egypt—*there was not a house where there was not one dead* (12:30). God’s judgment brought death. Even in the houses of the Israelites, there was death. It was not the death of the firstborn but the death of the lamb.

Thus, the Passover lamb becomes the demonstration that God’s judgment on sin requires death and that this judgment can fall either on the individual or



on a substitutionary sacrifice that bears the death in his/her place. In Exodus, it was only those who marked the doors of their house with the blood of the lamb that averted God’s judgment.

Every sacrifice instituted in Israel after Passover was a reminder of this truth. For God’s judgment to be averted, to “pass over” a person, they needed the blood of a substitutionary sacrifice. They needed the blood of a perfect, spotless lamb.

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures.

EXODUS 12:1-20

Moses and Aaron here *receive of the Lord* what they were afterwards to *deliver to the people* concerning the ordinance of the passover, to which is prefixed an order for a new calendar in their months: *This shall be to you the beginning of months*. They had hitherto begun their year from the middle of September, but henceforward they were to begin it from the middle of March, at least in all their ecclesiastical computations. Note: It is good to begin the day, and begin the year, and especially to begin our lives, with God. This new calculation began the year with the spring, which *reneweth the face of the earth*, and was used as a figure of the coming of Christ.

We may suppose that, while Moses was bringing the ten plagues upon the Egyptians, he was directing the Israelites to prepare for their departure at an hour's warning. Probably he had by degrees brought them near together from their dispersions, for they are here called *the congregation of Israel* (v. 3), and to them as a congregation orders are here sent. Their amazement and hurry, it is easy to suppose, were great; yet now they must apply themselves to the observance of a sacred rite, to the honor of God. Note: When our heads are fullest of care, and our hands of business, yet we must not forget our religion, nor suffer ourselves to be indisposed for acts of devotion.

I. God appointed that on the night wherein they were to go out of Egypt they should, in each of their families, *kill a lamb*, or that two or three families, if they were small, should join for a lamb. The lamb was to be got ready four days before and that afternoon they were to *kill it* as a sacrifice (v. 27)... See the antiquity of family-religion; and see the convenience of the joining of small families together for religious worship, that it may be made the more solemn.

II. The lamb so slain they were to eat, roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, because they were to eat it *in haste*, and to leave none of it until the morning; for God would have them to depend upon him for their daily bread, and not to take thought for the morrow. He that led them would feed them.

III. Before they ate the flesh of the lamb, they were to sprinkle the blood upon the doorposts. By this their houses were to be distinguished from the houses of the Egyptians, and so their firstborn secured from the sword of the destroying angel. Dreadful work was to be made this night in Egypt; all the firstborn both of man and beast were to be slain, and judgment executed upon the gods of Egypt... For the protection of Israel from this plague they were ordered to sprinkle the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts, their doing which would be accepted as an instance of their faith in the divine warnings and their obedience to the divine precepts. Note: If in times of common calamity God will secure his own people, and set a mark upon them; they shall be hidden either in heaven or under heaven, preserved either from the stroke of judgments or at least from the sting of them...

IV. This was to be annually observed as a feast of the Lord in their generations, to which the *feast of unleavened bread* was annexed, during which, for seven days, they were to eat no bread but what was unleavened, in remembrance of their being confined to such bread, of necessity, for many days after they came out of Egypt.

1. The paschal lamb was a type. Christ is *our Passover*, 1 Cor. 5:7. It was to be a *lamb*; and Christ is *the Lamb of God* (Jn. 1:29), often in the Revelation called the *Lamb*, meek and innocent as a lamb, silent before the shearers...

It was to be a *male of the first year*, in its prime; Christ offered up himself in the midst of his days, not in infancy with the babes of Bethlehem. It denotes the strength and sufficiency of the Lord Jesus, on whom our help is laid. It was to be *without blemish*, denoting the purity of the Lord Jesus, a Lamb *without spot*, 1 Pet. 1:19. The judge who condemned him pronounced him innocent. It was to be set apart four days before, denoting the designation of the Lord Jesus to be a Savior, both in the purpose and in the promise. It is very observable that as Christ was crucified at passover, so he solemnly entered into Jerusalem four days before, the very day that the paschal lamb was set apart. It was to be *roasted with fire*, denoting the intense sufferings of the Lord Jesus, even unto death, the death of the cross. The wrath of God is as fire, and Christ was made a curse for us. It was to be killed by the whole congregation between the two evenings, that is, between three o'clock and six... Not *a bone of it must be broken*, which is expressly said to be fulfilled in Christ (Jn. 19:33, 36), denoting the unbroken strength of the Lord Jesus.

2. The sprinkling of the blood was a type. It was not enough that the blood of the lamb was shed, but it must be sprinkled, denoting the application of the merits of Christ's death to our souls; we must *receive the atonement*, Rom. 5:11... It was to be sprinkled upon the *door-posts*, denoting the open profession we are to make of faith in Christ, and obedience to him, as those that are not ashamed to own our dependence upon him. It was to be sprinkled upon the *lintel* and the *sideposts*, but not upon the *threshold*, which cautions us to take heed of tramp-ling underfoot the blood of the covenant, Hebrews 10:29. It is precious blood, and must be precious to us.

The blood, thus sprinkled, was a means of the preservation of the Israelites from the destroying angel, who had nothing to do where the blood was. If the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our consciences, it will be our protection from the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the damnation of hell, Romans 8:1.

3. The eating of the lamb was a type of our gospel-duty to Christ. The paschal lamb was killed, not to be looked upon only, but to be fed upon; so we must by faith make Christ ours, as we do that which we eat, and we must receive spiritual strength and nourishment from him, as from our food, and have delight and satisfaction in him, as we have in eating and drinking when we are hungry or thirsty. It was to be all eaten; those that by faith feed upon Christ must feed upon a whole Christ; they must take Christ and his yoke, Christ and his cross, as well as Christ and his crown.

It was to be eaten immediately, not deferred till morning. *Today* Christ is offered, and is to be accepted while it is called today, before we sleep the sleep of death. It was to be eaten *with bitter herbs*, in remembrance of the bitterness of their bondage in Egypt. We must feed upon Christ with sorrow and brokenness of heart, in remembrance of sin; this will give an admirable relish to the paschal lamb. Christ will be sweet to us if sin be bitter...

4. The feast of unleavened bread was a type of the Christian life. Having received Christ Jesus the Lord, we must keep a feast in holy joy, continually delighting ourselves in Christ Jesus; no *manner of work must be done*, no care admitted or indulged, inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, this holy joy: if true believers have not a continual feast, it is their own fault.

It must be a feast of unleavened bread, kept in charity, without the leaven of malice, and in sincerity, without the leaven of hypocrisy. The law was very strict as to the passover, and the Jews were so in their usages, that no leaven should be *found in their houses*. All the old leaven of sin must be put far from us, with the utmost caution and abhorrence, if we would keep the feast of a holy life to the honor of Christ. It was by an *ordinance forever*; as long as we live, we must continue feeding upon Christ and rejoicing in him, always making thankful mention of the great things he has done for us.

EXODUS 12:21-28

I. Moses is here, as a faithful steward in God's house, teaching the children of Israel to *observe all things which God had commanded him*; and no doubt he gave the instructions as largely as he received them...

1. No Israelite must stir out of doors till morning, when they would be called to march out of Egypt. Not that the destroying angel could not have known an Israelite from an Egyptian in the street; but God would intimate to them that their safety was owing to the *blood of sprinkling*; if they put themselves from under the protection of that, it was at their peril...

2. They should carefully teach their children the meaning of this service. The question which the children would ask concerning this solemnity: "What is the meaning of all this care and exactness about eating this lamb, and this unleavened bread, more than about common food? Why such a difference between this meal and other meals?" Note: It is a good thing to see children inquisitive about the things of God; it is to be hoped that those who are careful to ask for the way will find it. Christ himself, when a child, *heard and asked questions*, Luke 2:46...

The answer which the parents were to return to this question: *You shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover*, that is, "By the killing and sacrificing of this lamb, we keep in remembrance the work of wonder and grace which God did for our fathers, when to make way for our deliverance out of bondage, he slew the firstborn of the Egyptians, so compelling them

to sign our discharge and...when he might justly have destroyed our firstborn too, God graciously appointed and accepted the family-sacrifice of a lamb, instead of the firstborn."

The repetition of this solemnity every year was designed, *first*, to look backward as a memorial, that in it they might remember what great things God had done for them and their fathers. *Secondly*, it was designed to look forward as an earnest of the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God in the fulness of time, instead of us and our firstborn. We were obnoxious to the sword of the destroying angel, but *Christ our passover was sacrificed for us*, his death was our life, and thus he was the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*...

II. The people received these instructions with reverence and ready obedience. They *bowed the head and worshipped*: they hereby signified their submission to this institution as a law, and their thankfulness for it as a favor and privilege. Note: When God gives law to us, we must give honor to him; when he speaks, we must *bow our heads and worship*.

Then they *went away and did* as they were commanded. Here was none of that discontent and murmuring among them which we read of earlier, 5:20-21. The plagues of Egypt had done them good, and raised their expectations of a glorious deliverance, which before they despaired of; and now they went forth to meet it in the way appointed. Note: The perfecting of God's mercies to us must be waited for in a humble observance of his institutions.

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 12:1-28 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

It is not too hard to see how the Passover lamb points to Jesus Christ. He is the Lamb without blemish. His blood is sufficient for all and the only means by which we are saved from judgment.

Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:11-14)

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. (1 Peter 1:18-21)

What do you learn about Christ’s death from these verses above?

The doorway of a house is a representation of the doorway of my heart. I can close things out; I can let things in. But I must make the choice. The door handle is on the inside.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. —Revelation 3:20

If you have opened the door of your heart to Jesus Christ, then mark the frames and the lintel in the picture with a red marker or pencil and then draw the cross in the door.



ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Either sin is with you, lying on your shoulders, or it is lying on Christ, the Lamb of God.

Now if it is lying on your back, you are lost; but if it is resting on Christ, you are free, and you will be saved.

Now choose what you want.

Martin Luther

The entrance to the house with the sign of the blood is now a portal of freedom.

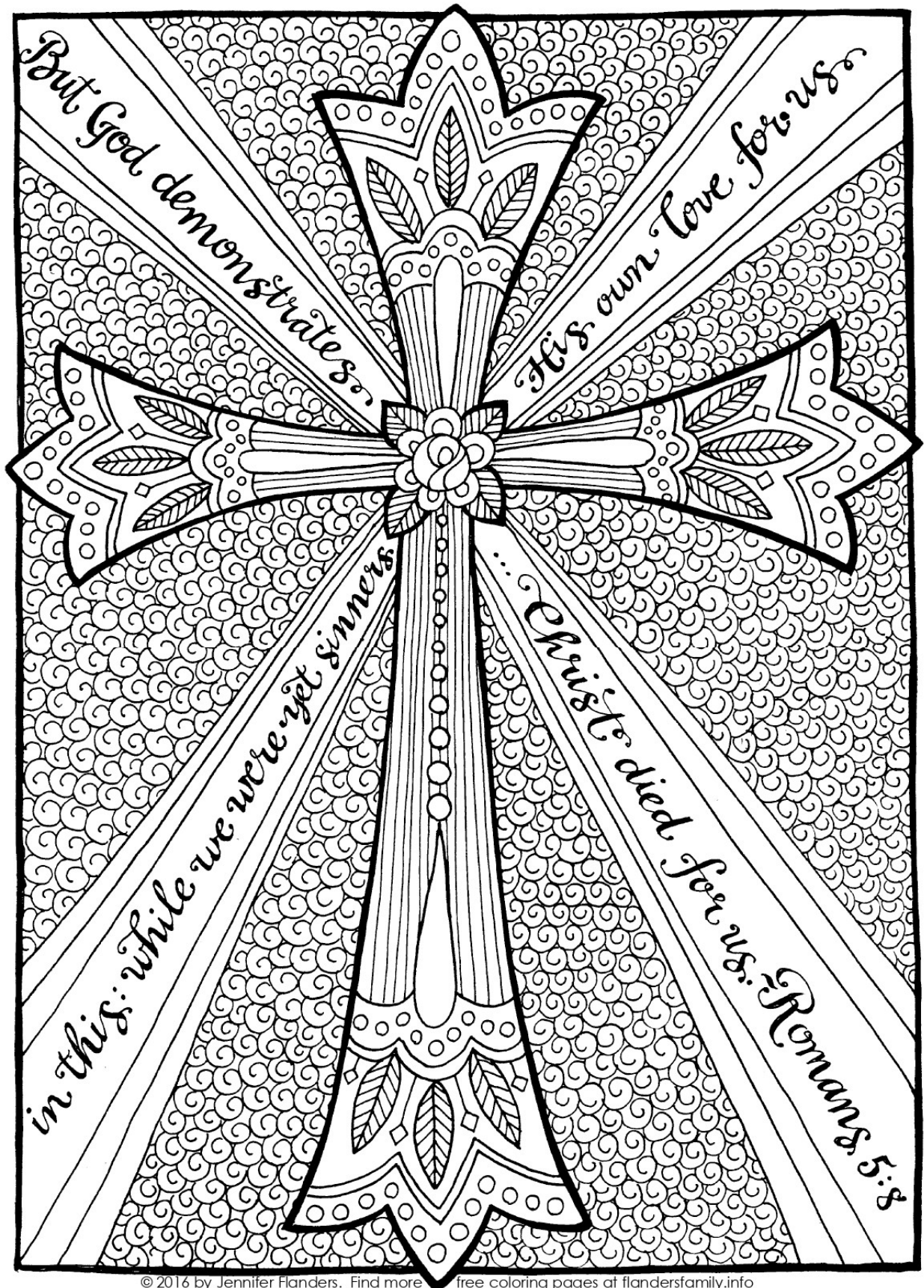
Nahum Sarna

*From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me.*

Amy Carmichael

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- What is one of the best family gatherings that you can ever remember having? What made this time so special and memorable?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 12:1-28? Why?
- What were the requirements for the lamb?
- Try to imagine that night. Think of the whole family gathered together at night (possibly with neighbors), the lamb being slain, the blood being put on the doors, the meal prepared. If you were a child, what would be going through your mind?
- Why a lamb? Why blood on the doorposts? What is so significant about a lamb? Blood?
- Why bitter herbs? Why unleavened bread? What do these elements convey?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- One of the best ways to understand Exodus 12 is to celebrate a Passover Seder together as a group. Go to messiahinthepassover.com/haggadah for a guide that you can use.



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LEAVING EGYPT

Exodus 12:29-51

DAY ONE

OBSERVATION

God promised to bring Israel out of Egypt, rescue them from their slavery, and redeem them with an outstretched arm and great judgments (6:6). This passage is the fulfillment of that promise.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 12:29-51. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. ³⁰ So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. ³¹ Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, “Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the Lord as you have said. ³² Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.”

³³ And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, “We shall all be dead.” ³⁴ So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. ³⁵ Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. ³⁶ And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

³⁷ Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. ³⁹ And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

⁴⁰ Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. ⁴¹ And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. ⁴² It is a night of solemn observance to the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

⁴³ And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “This is the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. ⁴⁴ But every man’s servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. ⁴⁵ A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. ⁴⁶ In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones. ⁴⁷ All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. ⁴⁸ And when a stranger dwells with you and wants to keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person shall eat it. ⁴⁹ One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you.”

⁵⁰ Thus all the children of Israel did; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. ⁵¹ And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the Lord brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt according to their armies. (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 12:29-51? Why?

What happened at midnight? (12:29) _____

Who all was affected? (12:29-30) _____

How did they respond? (12:30) _____

What does Pharaoh tell Moses and Aaron to do? (12:31-32) Note all the imperatives.

How do the Egyptians respond to the Israelites? (12:33-36) _____

Complete the following sentences from this passage:

About _____ men on foot journeyed from Egypt, besides children. (12:37)

A _____ went up with them also, and flocks and herds. (12:38)

The sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was _____ years. (12:40)

You shall not carry any of the lamb outside the house nor break one of its _____. (12:46)

If a stranger wants to keep the Passover, let all his males be _____ (12:48)

One _____ shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who sojourns among you. (12:49)

How do the people of Israel respond to all of these commands? (12:50)

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 12:33-36 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*Now the Egyptians pressured the people in order to send them quickly out of the country,
for they said, “We’re all going to die!”
So the people took their dough before it was leavened,
with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their clothes on their shoulders.*

*The Israelites acted on Moses’s word and asked the Egyptians for silver and gold items and for clothing.
And the Lord gave the people such favor with the Egyptians
that they gave them what they requested.
In this way they plundered the Egyptians. (CSB)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE

INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “Exodus 12” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on Exodus 12:36 to bring up the verse in Hebrew. Find the verb “spoiled” and click on the Strong’s number (H5337) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is this Hebrew word for “spoiled”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

How many times is it translated as “spoil”? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? (Note Strong’s Definitions and Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon.)

Read the following passages which use this Hebrew word. Mark key phrases as you read.

*In this way God has **snatched away** your father’s livestock and given them to me.* (Genesis 31:9)

***Rescue** me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, as well as the mothers with their children.* (Genesis 32:11)

*They said, “An Egyptian **delivered** us out of the hand of the shepherds and even drew water for us and watered the flock.”* (Exodus 2:19)

*So I have come down to **rescue** them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.* (Exodus 3:8)

*Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will **free** you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.* (Exodus 6:6)

*Then tell them, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and **spared** our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped.* (Exodus 12:27)

*And David said, “The Lord who **delivered** me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will **deliver** me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you!”* (1 Samuel 17:37)

*I sought the Lord, and He answered me; He **delivered** me from all my fears.* (Psalm 34:4)

*My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, Lord?
You **rescue** the poor from those too strong for them,
The poor and needy from those who rob them."* (Psalm 35:10)

***Rescue** me from the mire, do not let me sink;
Deliver me from those who hate me, from the deep waters.* (Psalm 69:14)

*Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit,
But righteousness **delivers** from death.* (Proverbs 10:2)

*Wealth does not profit in the day of wrath,
But righteousness **delivers** from death.* (Proverbs 11:4)

*This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. **Rescue** from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.* (Jeremiah 22:3)

*The one who builds his house by unjust gain is as good as dead.
He does this so he can build his nest way up high and **escape** the clutches of disaster.* (Habakkuk 2:9)

As you can see, this Hebrew word has a rich meaning and is translated in a lot of different ways.

List the different ways that this Hebrew word is translated in the verses above.

What do you learn about this Hebrew word from these verses?

What is interesting is that this Hebrew word is used several times in the context of the Exodus. God promises to **rescue** (deliver, snatch away) His people from the hand of the Egyptians and to **free** them from their slavery (3:8; 6:6). And God **saves** their homes during the Passover (12:27).

With this kind of meaning in mind, then it may be that the Israelites did not necessarily "plunder" the Egyptians (NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, CSB) as much as they *freed* them, *spared* them, or *rescued* them from their riches and possessions. After all, the Israelites were granted favor (lit., "grace") in the eyes of the Egyptians and the Egyptians were more than willing to give when they asked.

The Egyptians who enslaved and took advantage of the Israelites for many centuries, enriching themselves from their forced labor, apparently came to the place where many of them had a willing desire to give back to the Israelites and even bless them. Some even joined them (12:38). Could this then be an act of grace? Rescuing them from their own "bondage" to their riches?

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from John Calvin's *Commentary on the Bible*. **John Calvin** (1509-64) was a key figure in the Protestant Reformation. He was a pastor in Geneva, Switzerland and a theologian who shaped much of the theology of the Protestant church.

29. *And it came to pass, that at midnight.* Lest the hand of God should be hidden in this miracle, as well in the preservation of the people, Moses sets forth its power... For he both relates that the destruction took place at midnight, which was the time prescribed by God, and then adds, that all the firstborn of the land were smitten, from the son of the king to the son of the captive in the dungeon...

31. *And he called for Moses...* Although Pharaoh never should have seen Moses from the time that he threatened him with death if he came to him again, there is nothing absurd in saying that he called for him when he sent his nobles to him with his command. The perturbation of an alarmed and anxious person is expressed to the life in these words — “Rise up, get you forth, both ye and your children; go, serve the Lord; also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said.” For he takes no less precaution lest he should give any occasion for delay... The change in the man betrays itself, for the same God who had before hardened his iron heart has now broken it. Hence, too, that cry—the signal of despair—*We be all dead men!* Hence, too, their readiness to give willingly of their substance, and to dress up in spoils those whom they had pillaged before. Nor indeed does he without reason repeat that this favor proceeded from divine grace, since there would never have been such liberality in the Egyptians as willingly to proffer whatever precious things their houses possessed, and to give them to the Israelites, now ready to depart, whom they knew to be justly hostile to them on account of so many injuries. And that the children of Israel should be so prompt to obey, who before had been either slow, or inconstant, or sullen, or rebellious, was brought about by the guidance of the Spirit, who turned their hearts in a moment; since God well knew how to dispose opportunely all the springs of action.

37. *And the children of Israel journeyed.* Although it is probable that they were more widely dispersed, since that district could not have contained so great a multitude, especially when the Egyptians occupied it together with them; still because the recollection of the promise of redemption remained among them, it is not surprising that they should have preferred to be kept within narrow bounds, rather than to separate from the main body. That this was the peculiar abode of the nation is plain also from what has gone before, where Moses related that they were forced to servile tasks in building those fortified cities wherein they might be shut up, as in prison.

In the number of men which he reports, he commends the incredible miracle of God's favor in increasing and multiplying their race... The impious despisers of God betray their stupidity in their wicked audacity when they try to estimate this work of God by their own senses. For Moses' intention was ... to show that the promises were not unfulfilled, “I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore” (Gen. 12:2; 15:5; 22:17)—the effect of which promises was beyond human comprehension.

38. *And a mixed multitude...* We gather that the mixed multitude, which united themselves with the Israelites, were either the offspring of Egypt, or had migrated from the neighboring countries to take up their habitation there; as fertile lands often attract many strangers to them by the pleasures of abundance... If any should think it absurd that ungodly men, with no better hope before them, would voluntarily forsake a rich and convenient habitation in order to seek a new home as wanderers and pilgrims, let him recollect that Egypt had now been afflicted by so many calamities that by its very poverty and devastation it might easily

have driven away its inhabitants. A great part of the cattle had perished; all the fruits of the earth were corrupted; the fields were ravaged and almost desert; we need not, therefore, wonder if despair should have caused many sojourners to fly away, and even some of the natives themselves. It may be also that, having been inhumanly treated, they shook off the yoke of tyranny when a way to liberty was opened to them.

But although God gave His people a ready departure, still He did not choose to let them go out altogether without any inconvenience; for they...are compelled to carry in their bags unbaked masses of dough, that they may eat bread burned or toasted on the embers in their journey. By this example we are taught that God's blessings are always mingled with certain inconveniences, lest too great delight should corrupt the minds of the godly.

40. Now the sojourning of the children of Israel. The beginning of this period is not reckoned from the coming down of Jacob, for it is very clear from other passages, that, from the time that Jacob entered into Egypt to the Exodus, not more than 230 years at most had passed. The Jews generally only reckon 210; but Moses includes also the period during which Abraham and his children were not in possession of the promised land. The meaning therefore is, that from the time that the inheritance of the land of Canaan was given to Abraham, the promise was suspended for 400 years before his posterity enjoyed their right. For Paul also thus explains this difficulty (Galatians 3:17) where he says, that God had confirmed his covenant with Abraham 430 years before the law was promulgated. Moses, therefore, dates the commencement of this period from the sojourning of Abraham, when he was still the lord of the land of Canaan by the just title of donation.

With respect to the omission of the thirty years in Gen. 15:13, in this there is no contradiction, because the land had already been promised to Abraham some years previously, though, so far from obtaining dominion over it, he had scarce-

ly been permitted to occupy it as "a stranger." Therefore God apprizes him, that 400 years still remained before he would put his descendants into possession of it; and, consequently, that the little time which had elapsed was not sufficient for the trial of his patience, but that both for himself and for his posterity there was need of extraordinary endurance, lest they should faint under the weariness of the long delay...

He calls the people, weak as they were, by an honorable title, "the armies of the Lord," both to enforce again the power of God's blessing, and to give due honor to His grace in ruling and marshalling so confused a band. Although soldiers may be accustomed to obedience, and have learnt from exercise to keep their ranks; still it is a very difficult thing to march an army of 30,000 men by night without confusion, and in good order; how great a miracle was it, then, for 600,000 men, with women and children, much baggage, herds, and flocks, and other encumbrances, to pass by night through the midst of enemies, and all to escape safely without a single exception! To the same effect, Moses repeats in the last verse of this chapter, that "the Lord did bring the children of Israel out — by their armies," as much as to say, that there was no confusion in that immense multitude; since God performed the part of an incomparable Leader in His marvelous power.

42. It is a night to be much observed. The Israelites have good cause for sacrificing to God with a solemn ceremony year by year forever, and for celebrating the memory of that night. The Passover was instituted in token of their gratitude. This admonition was very useful, in order that the Israelites should retain the legitimate use of this solemn feast-day, and that it might not grow into a mere cold ceremony, as is often the case; but that rather they might profitably exercise themselves in this emblem of their redemption. At the same time, he teaches that this inestimable benefit was not to be celebrated in one, or two, or three generations, but that as long as the people should remain it was worthy of eternal remembrance and should never be forgotten...

43. *This is the ordinance of the passover.* Since the passover was the sacred bond whereby God would hold the elect people in obligation to Himself, He forbids all strangers from partaking of it; because a promiscuous permission to eat of it would have been an unworthy profanation... For circumcision was then like a hedge, which should distinguish heathen nations from the holy race of Abraham; if, then, any should wish to celebrate the passover together with the elect people, it was necessary that he should be circumcised, so as to attach himself to the true God; though God did not merely refer to the outward sign, but to the goal—that all who were circumcised should promise to seek sincere faith...

From the analogy between the Holy Supper and the Passover, this law remains in force now, that no polluted or impure person should intrude himself at the Lord's table, but that only the faithful should be received, after they have professed themselves to be followers of Christ.

46. *Neither shall ye break a bone thereof.* I am not certain why God desired no bone to be broken; unless that this might also be a sign of haste because people at table seldom partake of the marrow, unless they have extended leisure to eat... Thus, they were commanded, when they were standing in readiness for their journey, and eating hurriedly, to burn the bones in order to prevent all delay. What God commanded as to the lamb, He chose to have openly fulfilled in the person of His only-begotten Son; that the truth corresponding with its type, and the substance with its shadow, might show

that God would be reconciled to His people by no other blood than Christ's. Whence it is again clear that the ancients under the Law were instructed by the Paschal Lamb as to the future redemption, for otherwise this passage could not have been properly accommodated to Christ. When John quotes it (19:33) he takes it for granted that...He was distinguished by this visible mark, which proved Him to be the true Passover lamb. And in order that no bone of Christ's should be broken, God's providence wonderfully interfered. The soldiers were commanded to hasten the death of Christ, no less than that of the robbers, by breaking their bones. They execute their intention on the robbers, but lest they should attempt the same on Christ, it is certain that they were restrained by a divine power, so that the wholeness of His bones might be a sign of the approaching redemption.

50. *Thus did all the children of Israel.* This chiefly refers to the slaying of the Paschal lamb with its adjuncts, although I do not deny that allusion is also made to the other circumstances attending their sudden departure. But it is not so much their promptitude and alacrity which are praised, as the wondrous power of God in fashioning their hearts, and directing their hands, so that, in the darkness of the night, amidst the greatest disturbances, in precipitate haste, with nothing well prepared, they were so active and dexterous. Meanwhile, Moses concludes, from the obedience of the people, that nothing was done without the command and guidance of God; from whence it is more clearly manifest that He was the sole author of their deliverance.

What thought from John Calvin's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

Take time to re-read Exodus 12:29-51 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

Passover was to be remembered throughout all generations. The event was a one-time event. God’s great judgments on Egypt and Israel’s unique deliverance from slavery was not going to be repeated in history. But it was to be remembered.

We are a people who easily forget. The lessons learned by one generation are quickly forgotten by the next. Even from day to day, we can forget the blessings that God has given us in the past, the times that we have seen His faithfulness, the simple ways we have experience His goodness.

Think back over your life. Remember the times in which you saw God’s hand, sensed His presence, or experienced His goodness. Describe (or draw) three of these events in the boxes below.

Share one of these events with someone you know. Rejoice and thank God for His goodness!

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

*I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
I will remember Your wonders of old.
I will ponder all Your work,
And meditate on Your mighty deeds.*

Psalm 77:11-12

*Obedience falters
when memory fails.*

Tim Chester

*Nothing is ever really lost to us
as long as we remember it.*

L. M. Montgomery

The danger lies in forgetting.

Elie Wiesel

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- When is a time in your life when you forgot something important? What were the consequences of forgetting?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 12:29-51? Why?
- What made the last plague on Egypt so devastating? How did Pharaoh respond? How did the Egyptians respond? How did Israel respond?
- What do you think it means that the Israelites “plundered” the Egyptians?
- Is it surprising to you that a “mixed multitude” left with the Israelites? Who do you think these people were? Why do you think they joined with Israel?
- Why do you think it was so important for the Israelites to remember Passover?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of John Calvin? If so, what?
- Share one of the times in your life when you saw God’s hand, sensed His presence, or experienced His goodness in some way. If you can, find an object to remind you of this event and put it some place to act as a remembrance to you and to others.

FOLLOWING GOD

Exodus 13:1-22

DAY ONE OBSERVATION

Israel has been set free from the house of bondage. They have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Now, they must learn to dedicate their lives unto God and follow Him wherever He leads.

Ask God to speak to your heart as you read Exodus 13:1-22. Mark words or phrases that stand out to you. Write down the main message or your thoughts next to each paragraph.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.”

³ And Moses said to the people: “Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by a strong hand the Lord brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten. ⁴ On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. ⁵ And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall keep this service in this month. ⁶ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there shall be a feast to the Lord. ⁷ Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. ⁸ And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, ‘This is done because of what the Lord did for me when I came up from Egypt.’ ⁹ It shall be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the Lord’s law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt. ¹⁰ You shall therefore keep this ordinance in its season from year to year.

¹¹ “And it shall be, when the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, ¹² that you shall set apart to the Lord all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the Lord’s. ¹³ But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴ So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ¹⁵ And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ ¹⁶ It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”

¹⁷ Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, “Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.” ¹⁸ So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁹ And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you.”

²⁰ So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. ²¹ And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. ²² He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people. (NKJV)

What thought or verse stands out to you in Exodus 13:1-22? Why?

Using different highlighters or colored pencils (or markings), highlight the following words:

- “Lamb” or “redeem” in red or with a box.
- “Firstborn” in yellow or with an underline.
- “By a strong hand” in light blue or with a circle.
- “Swore to your fathers” or “swore to you and your fathers” in green or with a ★.

Complete the following sentences from this passage:

Consecrate to Me all the firstborn ... both of man and beast; it is _____. (13:1)

Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of _____ (13:2).

He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with _____ and _____ (13:5).

All the firstborn of man among your sons you shall _____ (13:13).

What should a father tell his son when he asks about the meaning of these things? (13:14-15)

Why didn't God take the people the shortest route, through the land of the Philistines? (13:17)

What did Moses carry with him? (13:19) _____

Why? _____

How did God lead the people? (13:21-22) _____

DAY TWO
MEDITATION

Quiet your heart and allow God to speak through His Word. Slowly read Exodus 13:14-16 several times. Reflect on each word. Meditate on them over and over until you memorize them.

*In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him,
'With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go,
the Lord killed the firstborn of both people and animals in Egypt.
This is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first male offspring of every womb
and redeem each of my firstborn sons.'*

*And it will be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on your forehead
that the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his mighty hand. (NIV)*

Write down the observations that you can make from this passage, sketch out any images or thoughts that you have, or simply rewrite the passage below giving emphasis to key words.

Offer the passage back to God in the form of a personalized prayer.

DAY THREE

INTERPRETATION

In interpretation, you are digging deeper into the passage in order to better understand its meaning. A word study on a key word and/or looking up parallel passages can help you in your understanding.

Go to blueletterbible.org and type “Exodus 13” into the “Search the Bible” box. Click on Exodus 13:2 to bring up the verse in Hebrew. Find the verb “sanctify” and click on the Strong’s number (H6942) to bring up the Hebrew word, its definition, and its usage in the Old Testament.

What is this Hebrew word for “sanctify”? _____ (Use the transliteration.)

How many times is it used in the OT? _____ (See KJV Translation Count.)

What is its definition? _____

This Hebrew verb is the root of the words “holy” and “holiness.” The concept of holiness is not always easy to understand. The first time the word is used in Scripture is in Genesis 2:3.

*Then God blessed the seventh day and **sanctified** it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (NKJV)*

*God blessed the seventh day and **declared it holy**, for on it he rested from all his work of creation. (CSB)*

*God blessed the seventh day and **separated it as holy**; because on that day God rested from all his work which he had created, so that it itself could produce. (CJB)*

The next time this Hebrew verb is used is in this passage—Exodus 13:2.

***Consecrate** to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine. (NKJV)*

***Set aside** for me all the firstborn. Whatever is first from the womb among the people of Israel, both of humans and of animals, belongs to me. (CJB)*

Based on these verses, how would you define the concept of consecration or holiness?

The importance of the **firstborn** also needs to be understood. In ancient culture, the firstborn represented the “father’s strength” (Gen. 49:3; Deut. 21:17). The firstborn son typically followed in the father’s footsteps, taking up the same occupation that he had, carrying on the family’s name, acting as the leader of the family in the father’s absence, and receiving the “double portion” of the father’s inheritance (Deut. 21:17). Thus, the firstborn son became a symbol of that which is special, unique, set apart. It was that which was “first” in a person’s heart.

Read the following passages that show the symbolic significance of the firstborn.

*Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my **firstborn** son.’ (Exodus 4:22)*

*I have found David, my servant;
With my holy oil I have anointed him.*

.....

*He will call out to me, ‘You are my Father,
My God, the Rock my Savior.’
And I will appoint him to be My **firstborn**,
The most exalted of the kings of the earth.
I will maintain My love to him forever,
And My covenant with him will never fail.
I will establish his line forever,
His throne as long as the heavens endure. (Psalm 89:20, 26-29)
I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble,
For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my **firstborn**. (Jeremiah 31:9b)*

*For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,
that He might be the **firstborn** among many brothers. (Romans 8:29)*

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** over all creation. (Colossians 1:15)*

*He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the **firstborn** from the dead,
that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Colossians 1:18)*

*in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through
whom also He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation
of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He
sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as
the name He has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say,*

*“You are My Son;
Today I have become Your Father”?*

Or again,

*“I will be His Father,
And He will be My Son”?*

*And again, when God brings his **firstborn** into the world, He says,
“Let all God’s angels worship Him.”*

What are the privileges, blessings, or rights of the firstborn according to these passages?

DAY FOUR
DEVOTION

Read the following excerpt from **Matthew Henry's Exposition of the Old and New Testaments**. Matthew Henry (1662-1714) was a pastor, speaker, and author from Chester, England. He is best known for his exhaustive, six-volume, verse-by-verse commentary on the Scriptures.

EXODUS 13:1-10

Care is taken to perpetuate the remembrance of the exodus:

I. Of the preservation of Israel's firstborn, when the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain. In memory of that distinguishing favor, and in gratitude for it, the firstborn, in all ages, were to be consecrated to God, as his peculiars, and to be redeemed, v. 13. God, who by the right of creation is proprietor and sovereign of all the creatures, here lays claim in particular to the firstborn of the Israelites... Note: God, who is the first and best, should have the first and best, and to him we should resign that which is most dear to us, and most valuable. The firstborn were the joy and hope of their families. Therefore *they shall be mine*, says God... We love God best (as we ought) if we are willing to part with that to him which we love best in this world... Christ is the *firstborn among many brethren* (Rom. 8:29), and, by virtue of their union with him, all that are born again, and born from above, are accounted as firstborn. There is an *excellency of dignity and power* belonging to them; and, *if children, then heirs*.

II. The remembrance of their coming out of Egypt must also be perpetuated: *Remember this day*, v. 3. Remember it by a good token, as the most remarkable day of your lives, the birthday of your nation, or the day of its coming of age, to be no longer under the rod. Thus the day of Christ's resurrection is to be remembered for in it we were raised up with Christ out of death's *house of bondage*... Remember it, for *by strength of hand the Lord brought you out*. Note: The more of God and his power appears in any deliverance, the more memorable it is.

1. They must be sure to keep the feast of unleavened bread. It was not enough that they

remembered it, but they must celebrate the memorial of it in that way which God had appointed, and use the instituted means of preserving the remembrance of it. So, under the gospel, we must not only remember Christ, but *do this in remembrance* of him. Observe: How strict the prohibition of leaven is; not only no leaven must be eaten, but none must be seen, no, not in all their quarters. Accordingly, the Jews, before the feast of the passover, cast all the leavened bread out of their houses... They searched diligently with lighted candles in all the corners of their houses, lest any leaven should remain. The care and strictness enjoined in this matter were designed to make the feast the more solemn, and consequently the more taken notice of by their children, who would ask, "Why is so much ado made?" It also teaches us how solicitous we should be to put away from us all sin, 1 Cor. 5:7.

2. They must instruct their children in the meaning of it, and relate to them the story of their deliverance out of Egypt. Note: Care must be taken to instruct children in the knowledge of God. Here is an ancient law for catechizing. It is particularly of great use to acquaint children with the stories of the scripture, and to make them familiar to them. It is a debt we owe to the honor of God, and to the benefit of our children's souls, to tell them of the great works God has done for his church, both those which we have seen with our eyes done in our day and which we have heard with our ears and our fathers have told us... Those that have God's law in their heart should have it in their mouth, and be often speaking of it, the more to affect themselves and to instruct others.

EXODUS 13:11-16

I. Directions concerning the dedicating of their firstborn to God. The firstlings of their

cattle were to be dedicated to God, as part of their possessions. Those of clean beasts—calves, lambs, and kids—if males, were to be sacrificed. Those of unclean beasts, as colts, were to be redeemed with a lamb, or knocked on the head. For whatsoever is unclean (as we all are by nature), if it be not redeemed, will be destroyed. The firstborn of their children were to be redeemed, and by no means sacrificed, as the Gentiles sacrificed their children to Moloch. The price of the redemption of the firstborn was fixed by the law (Num. 18:16). We were all obnoxious to the wrath and curse of God; by the blood of Christ we are redeemed, that we may be joined to the *church of the firstborn* [Heb. 12:23]...

II. Directions concerning the catechizing of their children... It is supposed that, when they saw all the firstlings thus devoted, they would ask the meaning of it, and their parents and teachers must tell them that God's special propriety in their firstborn, and all their firstlings, was founded in his special preservation of them from the sword of the destroying angel. Being thus delivered, they must serve him. Note: Children should be directed and encouraged to ask their parents questions concerning the things of God, a practice which would be perhaps of all others the most profitable way of catechizing; and parents must furnish themselves with useful knowledge, that they may be ready always to give an answer to their enquiries. If ever the *knowledge of God cover the earth*, as the waters do the sea, the fountains of family-instruction must first be broken up. We should all be able to show cause for what we do in religion. As sacraments are sanctified by the word, so they must be explained and understood by it. God's service is reasonable, and it is then acceptable when we perform it intelligently, knowing what we do and why we do it.

It must also be observed how often it is said in this chapter that *by strength of hand* (v. 3, 14, 16), *with a strong hand* (v. 9), the Lord brought them out of Egypt. The more opposition is given to the accomplishment of God's purposes

the more is his power magnified therein. It is a strong hand that conquers hard hearts...

EXODUS 13:17-22

I. The choice God made of their way. He was their guide. Moses gave them direction but as he received it from the Lord. Note: The way of man is not in himself, Jer. 10:23. He may *devise his way*, and design it; but, after all, it is God that *directs his steps*, Prov. 16:9. Man proposes, but God disposes, and in his disposal we must acquiesce, and set ourselves to follow providence. There were two ways from Egypt to Canaan. One was a short cut from the north of Egypt to the south of Canaan, perhaps about four or five days' journey; the other was much further about, through the wilderness, and that was the way in which God chose to lead his people Israel.

1. There were many reasons why God led them through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. The Egyptians were to be drowned in the Red Sea. The Israelites were to be humbled and proved in the wilderness, Deu. 8:2. God had given it to Moses for a sign, *You shall serve God in this mountain*. They had again and again told Pharaoh that they must go *three days' journey into the wilderness to do sacrifice*, and therefore it was requisite that they should bend their march that way, else they would justly have been exclaimed against as notorious dissemblers. Before they entered the lists with their enemies, matters must be settled between them and their God, laws must be given, ordinances instituted, covenants sealed, and the original contract ratified, for the doing of which it was necessary that they should retire into the solitudes of a wilderness, the only closet for such a crowd; the high road would be no proper place for these transactions...

God's way is the right way, though it seem *round about*. If we think he leads not his people the nearest way, yet we may be sure he leads them the best way, and so it will appear when we come to our journey's end. *Judge nothing before the time*.

2. There was one reason why God did not lead them the nearest way, which would have brought them after a few days' march to *the land of the Philistines* (for it was that part of Canaan that lay next to Egypt), namely, because they were not as yet fit for war, much less for war with the Philistines. Their spirits were broken with slavery; it was not easy for them to turn their hands of a sudden from the trowel to the sword. The Philistines were formidable enemies, too fierce to be encountered by raw recruits; it was more suitable that they should begin with the Amalekites, and be prepared for the wars of Canaan by experiencing the difficulties of the wilderness. Note: God proportions his people's trials to their strength, and will *not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able*, 1 Cor. 10:13. That promise, if compared with the foregoing verses, will seem to refer to this event, as an instance of it. *God knows our frame*, and considers our weakness and faintheartedness, and by less trials will prepare us for greater.

God is said to bring Israel out of Egypt as the eagle *brings up her young ones* (Deut. 32:11), teaching them by degrees to fly. Orders being thus given which way they should go, we are told that they went up themselves, not as a confused rout, but in good order, rank and file. They went up by *five in a rank* (so some), in *five squadrons*, so others. They marched like an army with banners, which added much to their strength and honor.

They took the *bones of Joseph* along with them, and probably the bones of the rest of Jacob's sons, unless (as some think) they had been privately carried to Canaan (Acts 7:16), severally as they died. Joseph had particularly appointed that his bones should be carried up when God should visit the (Gen. 50:25-26), so that their carrying up his bones was not only a performance of the oath their fathers had sworn to Joseph, but an acknowledgment of the performance of God's promise to them by Joseph that he would visit them and bring them out of the land of Egypt, and an encouragement to their faith and hope that he would fulfil the other part

of the promise, which was to bring them to Canaan, in expectation of which they carried these bones with them while they wandered in the desert. They might think, "Joseph's bones must rest at last, and then we shall." Moses is said to take these bones with him. Moses was now a very great man; so had Joseph been in his day, yet he was now but a box full of dry bones; this was all that remained of him in this world, which might serve for a monitor to Moses to remember his mortality...

II. Here is the guidance they were blessed with in the way: *The Lord went before them in a pillar*. In the first two stages it was enough that God directed Moses whither to march: he knew the country and the road well enough; but now that they had come to *the edge of the wilderness* they would have occasion for a guide; and a very good guide they had, one that was infinitely wise, kind, and faithful: *The Lord went before them*, the *shechinah* (or appearance of the divine Majesty, which was typical of Christ) or a manifestation of the eternal Word, which, in the fulness of time, was to be *made flesh*, and *dwell among us*. Christ was with them in the wilderness, 1 Cor. 10:9... Note: Those whom God brings into a wilderness he will not leave nor lose there, but will take care to lead them through it; we may well think it was a very great satisfaction to Moses and the pious Israelites to be sure that they were under divine guidance. Those needed not to fear missing their way who were thus led, nor being lost who were thus directed; those needed not to fear being benighted who were thus illuminated, nor being robbed who were thus protected. Those who make the glory of God their end, and the word of God their rule, the Spirit of God the guide of their affections, and the providence of God the guide of their affairs, may be confident that *the Lord goes before them*, as truly as he went before Israel in the wilderness, though not so sensibly; we must live by faith.

1. They had sensible evidences of God's going before them. They all saw an appearance from heaven of a pillar, which in the

bright day appeared cloudy, and in the dark night appeared fiery. We commonly see that that which is a flame in the night is a smoke in the day; so was this. God gave them this ocular demonstration of his presence, in compassion to the infirmity of their faith, and in compliance with that infant state of the church, which needed to be thus lisped to in their own language; but blessed are *those that have not seen and yet have believed* God's gracious presence with them, according to his promise.

2. They had sensible effects of God's going before them in this pillar. For it led the way in that vast howling wilderness, in which there was no road, no track, no way-mark, of which they had no maps, through which they had no guides. When they marched, this pillar went before them, at the rate that they could follow, and appointed the place of their encampment, as Infinite Wisdom saw fit, which both eased them from care, and secured them from danger, both in moving and in resting. It sheltered them by day from the heat, which, at some times of the year, was extreme. It gave them light by night when they had occasion for it, and at all times made their camp pleasant and the wilderness they were in less frightful.

III. These were constant standing miracles: He *took not away the pillar of cloud*; no, not when they seemed to have less occasion for it, travelling through inhabited countries, no, not when they murmured and were provoking; it never left them, till it brought them to the

borders of Canaan. It was a cloud which the wind could not scatter. This favor is acknowledged with thankfulness long afterwards, Neh. 9:19; Ps. 78:14. There was something spiritual in this pillar of cloud and fire.

1. The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses in this cloud, which, some think, distilled dew upon them, 1 Cor. 10:2. By coming under this cloud, they signified their putting themselves under the divine guidance and command by the ministry of Moses. Protection draws allegiance; this cloud was the badge of God's protection, and so became the bond of their allegiance. Thus they were initiated, and admitted under that government, now when they were entering upon the wilderness.

2. Some make this cloud a type of Christ. The cloud of his human nature was a veil to the light and fire of his divine nature... Christ is our way, the light of our way and the guide of it.

3. It signified the special guidance and protection which the church of Christ is under in this world. God himself is the keeper of Israel, and he *neither slumbers nor sleeps*, Ps. 121:4. There is a defense created, not only on Zion's assemblies, but on every dwelling-place in Zion. Nay, every Israelite indeed is hidden under the shadow of God's wings (Psalm 17:8); angels, whose ministry was made use of in this cloud, are employed for their good, and pitch their tents about them. *Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people?*

What thought from Matthew Henry's words stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY FIVE
APPLICATION

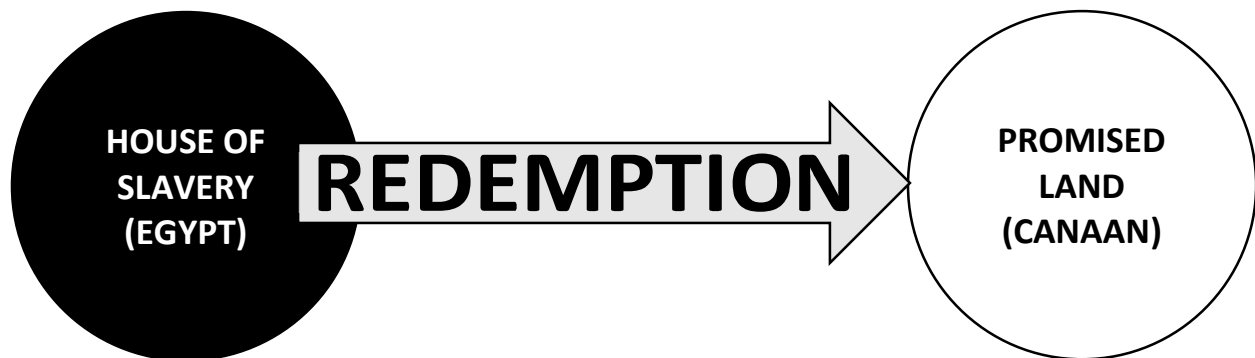
Take time to re-read Exodus 13:1-22 and consider your Bible study this week. Write down 2-3 thoughts that impacted you this week.

The first part of the story of Exodus is now complete. The people are redeemed! The blood of the lamb has delivered them from the judgment of God! They are freed from bondage in Egypt!

They are leaving Egypt now they must learn what it means to follow God.

They have been delivered *out of* the house of slavery and *into* the household of God.

There is much we can learn from Israel's exodus from Egypt. It is a picture of our own redemption from the house of slavery—from our bondage to sin, Satan, the world, and death.



Redemption removes us from Egypt but it does not immediately remove Egypt from *within* us. God did not take His people straight from Egypt into Canaan. He knew that they were not ready. They needed to be prepared in the wilderness. They needed to learn to trust Him, to follow Him.

In Exodus 13, we see some of the key practices that were needed in Israel's *sanctification*. These were the things that would *set apart* Israel, transforming them into God's special, unique people.

1. **Giving God my first, my best.** Dedicating the firstborn was like giving God a person's best.
2. **Remembering His redemption.** Remembering and talking about the exodus over and over.
3. **Removing all leaven.** Removing leaven was a picture of removing all sin and corruption.
4. **Following God day-by-day.** Each day the Israelites were to follow the cloud and the fire.

Using Exodus 13 as a paradigm to your own walk with God, answer the questions below.

Am I giving God my first, my best?

TIME: What gains my first attention and first focus in the morning?

MONEY: What is my first priority with my finances?

GOALS: What is my priority in life? What am I pursuing above all else?

Am I remembering His redemption and talking about it with others?

IDENTITY: What do I see as the most important thing about myself?

WORDS: What do I talk about the most? Do I tell others about my faith?

Am I leaving Egypt behind? Am I removing the leaven from my heart and life?

IDOLS: What things dominate my time and attention that need to be dethroned?

SIN: What sins and addictions do I need to reject and remove from my life?

Am I learning to follow God daily—reading His word, obeying Him, worshiping Him?

GOD'S WORD: How much time and attention do I give to God's Word?

OBEDIENCE: What do I need to *stop* doing? What do I need to *start* doing?

WORSHIP: What can I praise God for today?

ADDITIONAL NOTES AND PRAYER REQUESTS

*This life was not intended to be
the place of our perfection,
but the preparation for it.*

Richard Baxter

*Sanctification means intense
concentration on God's point of view.
It means every power of body, soul,
and spirit is chained and kept for
God's purpose only. It will cause
an intense narrowing of all our
interests on earth, and an immense
broadening of all our interests in God.
Are we prepared for God to do all in us
that He separated us for?*

Oswald Chambers

*Did Christ finish His work **for** us?
Then there can be no doubt but
He will also finish His work **in** us.*

John Flavel

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR GROUP OR FAMILY DISCUSSION:

- Where are you in the birth order of your family? How do you think your birth order impacted you or shaped you?
- What word, verse, or thought stands out to you as you read Exodus 13:1-22? Why?
- What do you think it means to be “sanctified” or “consecrated” to God?
- What is so significant about the firstborn? What symbolic significance did it have?
- How important was family instruction in Israel? How was it to be done?
- Why didn't God take Israel on a more direct route to Canaan? What does this teach you?
- Did you discover anything new, interesting, or meaningful in your study of this passage this week? Or in your reading of Matthew Henry? If so, what?
- Israel's exodus from Egypt is a picture of our own redemption in Christ, then what can we learn from it?
- Share some of the principles you learned on pages 159-160 in this week's lesson.

FINAL THOUGHTS FROM EXODUS 1-13

Things that I have learned during this study:

Who is Jesus to you? Have you acknowledged Him as your only Savior and Lord? There is no other name under heaven by which people can be saved (Acts 4:12). Jesus entered our world to save us from our sins. He died on the cross for you and for me. He rose again to give us eternal life. Have you placed your trust in Him? If not, do so today!

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. —Romans 10:9-10

This study guide was written and compiled by Pastor Steve Foster for use with the Exodus sermon series at Community Bible Church, Baton Rouge, LA. You are welcome to reproduce any part of it for your own personal study. For any other use, please contact pastor@516church.org.



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